

Board of Assessment Appeals Minutes
Town of Oxford
Regular Meeting

April 11, 2016

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Linda Czaplinski, Ann Krane, Ed Carver (7:15 p.m.)

Amendments to Agenda:

1. Discuss meeting schedule and cancellations

Michelle Hanrahan cancelled her appointment for 7:45 p.m. During this period we will review and approve the minutes, and review the calendar dates for deliberation of appeals.

We will hear Charmane Howell-McCalla early since she is here.

APPEALS:

Appeal of Charmane Howell-McCalla, 8 Butternut Ridge Road, Oxford

Charmane Howell-McCalla was sworn in and made the following appeal. She is asking if her taxes will be going down since the assessment decreased by \$19,000. Linda Czaplinski explained that these are two different items. The Board of Finance works on a budget for the town. The mill rate is determined by the budget. Once the budget is passed, then you can approximate the taxes by taking the assessment and multiplying it by the mill rate. Linda Czaplinski stated to look on the Town website for the information on the upcoming town meeting which will be held next Monday at Quaker Farms School for questions on the budget. The proposed mill rate is available but the budget has to go to a referendum first. There were no other questions on the appeal.

MOTION:

Ann Krane moved to approve the April 5, 2016 minutes as presented. This was seconded by Ed Carver.

Discussion: Linda Czaplinski noted a few corrections: on page 1, put in parenthesis "Roller Bearing Company" next to RBC to identify the company. On page 3, under Catlin discussion, change "he didn't file his schedule and he didn't have time" to "he didn't file his schedule due to a death in the family." On page 3 under Casagrande Appeal change "make it one lot" to "make it one parcel".

MOTION

Ann Krane moved to approve the minutes as corrected. This was seconded by Ed Carver. All 3 Ayes. Motion carries.

Schedule/Calendar dates discussion:

Mr. Batkis would like to reschedule his appointment on April 14, 2016, to the last week in April since he recently had back surgery. We will reschedule Mr. Batkis for April 25, 2016 at 7:15, and a notice will be sent advising him of his rescheduled date and time.

Ed Carver noted that he cannot make the meeting on April 27th. The date of April 19th, Ed Carver has an Economic Development Commission meeting so is unable to change his schedule to meet on that date. It was decided to keep the April 18th date for deliberations. The April 27th date will not be cancelled at this time, in case there is a need to meet to finalize deliberations, without Ed Carver present.

Mr. Catlin was moved to April 21st, but Linda Czapinski will give him a call and see if he would like to come on April 14th at 7:30 in place of Mr. Batkis. We can then do minutes from 7 pm - 7:30 pm.

APPEALS (cont.)

Appeal of Janet Hertzmark, 146 Country Club Drive

Alan Hertzmark was sworn in and made the following appeal. He distributed a packet of the items he wanted to discuss. He used the Vision website to do his comparisons with the other models at Oxford Greens. His is a Redbridge Model, and is not on the golf course. His is 2080 square feet, and nothing is special about his house. They did add an open deck. Mr. Hertzmark felt the assessment is excessive because 1) comparable Redbridge houses are assessed for less than his; 2) the housing values at Oxford Greens have diminished; and 3) because of poor economic conditions. The comparisons made are all Redbridge Models on Country Club Drive and the amounts listed are assessed amounts. At the bottom of the page are Redbridge Models on Country Club Drive and they are on the Golf Course and have slightly higher assessments. He then compared the other Redbridge Models on Country Club Drive that have 1,960 square feet. Then he listed other Redbridge Models throughout Oxford Greens and all have lower assessments than their house. The third page outlines sales at Oxford Greens and all of the houses that are underlined in red have diminished in value in their selling price. Mr. Hertzmark stated his house does not have a second floor. He stated that a friend of his bought a resale at Oxford Greens and was sold for \$325,000 and the seller paid \$5000 for closing costs. This

house was assessed at \$253,000. He believes his assessment should be \$238,000 with an appraisal of \$340,000.

Linda Czaplinski asked if the other Redbridges have a deck. Mr. Hertzmark did not know. His deck cost \$5,000 for him to put it in. His home does have a workout room in the basement, which was part of the purchase price. He stated all of the bathrooms are standard in all of the Redbridge models. Linda Czaplinski explained the process and that the Board will deliberate and he should receive a letter with their decision by the first week in April.

Discussion: Linda stated that the Board needs clarification for the finished area of 600 feet in the basement for the exercise room, and the impact of the deck. All of the models are similar. When Linda spoke with the Assessor, the level of detail in the assessments were explained. Ed Carver suggested picking 2 of the higher assessed homes and two lower assessed homes and see where there are differences. Four of the comparable homes are on the Golf Course and his is not. We will need to see how the Assessor factors that in. His form has his estimate of value to be \$335,000. He stated it should be \$340,000.

Appeal of Michelle J. Hanrahan -- appellant cancelled, but Ed Carver asked about the vehicle since it did not mention what kind of vehicle it was.

Appeal of William Valentine, Cross Hollow Associates, c/o Myron Yudkin

Mr. Valentine was sworn in and made the following appeal. Mr. Valentine distributed a packet of information to the Board with better copies of the maps of wetlands. Mr. Valentine stated that only a small portion of the property is not in wetlands and there is a 100 foot setback area on top of the designated actual wetland area and setbacks are also non useable land. He stated that the lot is not accessible without crossing a major wetland. The frontage is in A zones and these are major flood zones. His appeal is based on the lack of use ability of the land. There may be 7 acres of dry land and you are unable to get to the property because of wetlands. He stated the only potential would be if any of the abutting property owners would want it, and he believes they do not have any interest in it. Mr. Valentine stated that excess acres are valued at \$7,500 per acre, so this would yield an assessment of approximately \$37,000 for the dry land, and this assumes the land is useable. If you have no access then it is not useable and therefore has no value at all. The owner has owned it since 1984 and has never appealed it before. About a year ago, the owner asked him how much he would be able to sell it for, and he asked him to do the appeal.

The field card does state that it had a field review on 9/1/2015. Ed Carver asked Mr. Valentine why did he buy it to begin with, Mr. Valentine stated it was commercial property at one time,

now it's OPD. Regulations were not as tough back then, and the owner had a small shopping center printed up for that property use. Flood Plain Zone was discussed. Ann Krane stated that the acreage is not enough for farmland. The new assessment is \$158,100, and is considered Oxford Professional District which means that you can have a doctor's office or an accountant's office on that property. The Board advised Mr. Valentine that they will look at all of the information and he will receive a letter with the decision sometime the beginning of May.

Appeal of Janet & Cynthia Peck Trustee, 548 Oxford Road, Oxford

Mr. Peck and Cynthia Peck were sworn in and made the following appeal. Mr. Peck is the husband of Janet and father of Cynthia Peck, and was on the deed in the past and was the keeper of records. Mr. Peck's argument for a reduction in the current assessment is that the market is flat. His neighbor, the house that has a sign out in the front "Cats Corner" had a real estate appraisal for \$395,000 and sold for \$300,000. He checked the neighbors up the road who have the same age home as his and they did have a 5% increase, but his increase was 11%. He did go to a hearing on December 30, 2015, and they did have a change which brought it back to an 8% increase. He feels the appraised value should be \$350,000. This would make it a 5% increase compared to the \$368,000. It is the same as it was before, and they changed nothing.

Linda Czaplinski asked if they have any backup documentation for their appeal. Mr. Peck did not bring in any documentation other than his past years assessment sheets. He stated in the past all the assessments were published in the paper and he did not see it in the paper this year. He is comparing his records for this year versus last year. Mr. Peck feels the 5% increase is fair. The house is a ranch with an apartment in the back. In 1992, they put a room over the garage. They have owned it since 1979. He did have an official appraisal done over ten years ago and thought it was a little over \$380,000 but the property was never formally split. Linda Czaplinski stated that the Board will be meeting throughout April, and they will get a letter sometime the beginning of May.

Appeal of Brian Botti, 1C Autumn Ridge Road, Oxford

Brian Botti and Vinnie Guardiano were sworn in and made the following appeal. The lot is 1C Autumn Ridge Road, on the corner of Riggs Street. It is accessed by a long driveway, with a substantial 12-1/2% slope. Extensive site work is needed. This was a westerly lot and is steep, so it must be paved. It requires a 610 foot driveway to get to the house to be built. He looked at sales and thought the value of \$178,000 was high. The field card states this property is valued at \$136,700. They stated that property on 1A sold for \$102,500, and is similar and has a shared driveway. There were two other sales on Riggs Street, #209, a 6.91 acre lot sold for \$100,000 in January of 2015, this property is on the market for \$115,000. Right behind subject property is on

the market now and is listed for \$118,000. Lot 1C is the most difficult lot to build on. They believe they put emphasis on this lot since it is on Autumn Ridge. They did meet with Vision for a hearing and they did bring it down to the same assessment as Lot 1A.

Linda Czaplinski noted that we will review all of the information and they will hear back from us the beginning of May after deliberations.

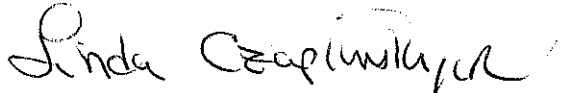
Discussion: The one comparable lot is almost 7 acres and the others were 2 acres. There is value in the land.

Linda Czaplinski will ask the Assessor about the Redbridge models.

MOTION:

Ed Carver moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m. This was seconded by Ann Krane. All 3 Ayes. Motion carries.

Respectfully submitted,



Linda Czaplinski, Chairman
Board of Assessment Appeals.

16 APR 18 PM 5:08
TOWN OF OXFORD, CT
Margaret A. Wood
TOWN CLERK