

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board of Assessors met on Wednesday, April 27, 2022, at approximately 6:07 PM. Present were Chairwoman Cheryl Smith, Clerk Paula Bunker, Member Deborah Cauley, Principal Assessor John Donahue, and Principal Secretary Daniela Nilsson.

The Principal Assessor stated the applicant that was scheduled to meet with the Board on April 20, 2022 had mixed up the dates and came to the meeting tonight. The Board discussed whether that would violate the Open Meeting Law since the appointment was not on the posted agenda. The Principal Assessor stated he felt it was permissible since Reviewing Applications for Abatement is on the schedule, and his appointment was to review his application. The Board agreed and the applicant for Abatement Application #7 joined the meeting.

The Applicant apologized for mixing up the meeting date and introduced himself as Mr. Wade Smith. He stated he was attending the meeting tonight to discuss the denial notice he received from the February 2, 2022 meeting regarding abatement application #7. The Principal Assessor stated the Board had denied the application because they felt that although the lot was split and landlocked, an easement could be granted to retain access to the rear land. The Applicant stated the land was locked because it had all been one parcel with a home on the parcel. He continued that he had planned to sell the home site and split the parcel to retain the back land for himself. The sale fell through, because he refused to sell the home if the tenant could not remain and the buyer did not want the tenant to remain in the home. The applicant stated he then decided to keep using the land the way it had been before and spent a considerable amount in renovating the home on the site. He added that the back land may be buildable, but only if the home is removed, which is not his plan, especially now that he had renovated it. The applicant also stated he has considered reassigning the land back to the original parcel, because that is the way it is being used, but even doing that would be costly and complex. The Chairwoman asked what the land was assessed for. The Principal Assessor stated it is a 3.30 Acre lot and was assessed for \$195,400. Clerk Bunker asked if it was an option to recombine the lots. The Principal Assessor agreed with the Applicant that it could be an option. The Applicant added that the land sits right against the railroad tracks and has no frontage so there are no plans for development. The Board took this under advisement and thanked the applicant for coming in. The Principal Assessor stated that the Board would discuss the application tonight and if the Applicant was unhappy with the results, he could still file with the Appellate Tax Board, as stated on his denial notice. The Applicant left at approximately 6:23 PM.

The Chairwoman asked the Principal Assessor what he recommended. The Principal Assessor stated that he had originally proposed an abatement to the Board. He recommended removing the home site, therefore making the land about \$20,000 per acre. Clerk Bunker asked if this was a one-time change or would be in effect moving forward. The Principal Assessor stated it would be a change moving forward, until any changes are made to the Property Record Card. The Board was in agreement with the recommendation.

Two (2) abatement certificates were presented to the Board. Certificate #5112 was a continuation of a past Appellate Tax Board hearing decision and regarding application #67. Certificate #5113 was an 8 of 58 Commonwealth of Massachusetts decision. The Board approved of both certificates.

The remaining Applications for Abatement for Fiscal Year 2022 were discussed and decided. Application #6 was presented to the Board. The Principal Assessor stated he had done an inspection and made the applicable changes to the Property Record Card, which included correcting the square footage on the sketch, adding the patio and deck, and correcting the sketch to include cathedral ceilings rather than a second story. He recommended a decrease in valuation by \$153,500. Application #17 was presented. The Principal Assessor stated he had changed the grade for the bathroom and kitchen to better align and recommended a decrease in valuation by \$14,700. Applications #65 and 66 were next. The Principal Assessor stated these are large parcels but they have permanent Conservation restrictions and recommended a decrease in valuation by \$325,700 and \$220,900. Applications #80 to 83 were presented. The Principal Assessor recommended denying #80 to 82 because the ownership changed after the January 1, 2021 assessment date. He recommended abating Application #83 for the Assessor Fine. Application #93 was presented next. He recommended abating in full since the land was given to the Town before the Assessment date. Next the Principal Assessor presented application #94 and recommended a decrease in valuation by \$22,100.

The Board was in agreement with all recommendations made. They abated applications # 6, 7, 17, 65, 66, 67, 83, 93, and 94. They denied applications #80, 81, and 82.

The Principal Assessor informed the Board that he had reached out to the Applicants of Abatement Application #74 a few weeks ago to schedule an inspection. The applicants stated they would call back with a date that worked for their schedule. Unfortunately, they only called back today. The Principal Assessor stated that he hoped to inspect the property before his retirement (May 1, 2022) but that he had called back earlier today and had to leave another message. He stated this was the only outstanding abatement application and if he was unable to do the inspection, the application would be deemed denied since it will pass the 3-month action window.

The Principal Assessor stated next on the Agenda was reviewing Executive Session minutes. He stated he has been checking the minutes and releasing them to the Board for review. The Board and Principal Assessor checked the minutes against the current Appellate Tax Board schedule to check the status before releasing the minutes. The Minutes reviewed were for 2021 and the beginning of 2022. All had pending adjudication and were deemed ready for approval but not ready for release. Clerk Bunker inquired about releasing minutes and redacting the sensitive information until it is ready to be released. The Principal Assessor stated he would reach out to the Attorney General for clarification on whether that was an acceptable practice for Executive Session minutes. He would also continue to review the remaining minutes.


Clerk Bunker inquired about the overall status of the office since this was the last meeting with the Principal Assessor. He stated things were going well and the next most pressing issue would be the Building Permits. He stated it was in the best interest of all to hire a Principal Assessor soon to begin inspections and field work for all the building permits. Clerk Bunker asked how the interviewing process was going. The Principal Assessor stated the Preliminary Screening Committee had interviewed two (2) candidates and may interview one (1) more. Clerk Bunker asked if all necessary paperwork for retirement had been submitted to the Human Resource Office. The Principal Assessor stated not everything had but would be by Thursday or Friday. Clerk Bunker asked if the Principal Assessor had submitted his final compensatory time sheets and if she could have a copy. The Principal Assessor stated he would send her any updates. Clerk Bunker asked if there was enough money left in the budget to cover compensatory time. The Principal Assessor stated there was.

A **motion** was made by the Chairwoman and seconded by Clerk Bunker to adjourn Executive Session. A **roll call vote** was taken as follows: Chairwoman Smith = affirmative, Clerk Bunker = affirmative, and Member Cauley = affirmative. The Board adjourned Executive Session at approximately 7:30 P.M.

Next Meeting: May 4, 2022

I certify that the minutes of this meeting are true and accurate to the best of my recollection.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Paula Bunker", written over a horizontal line.

Paula Bunker, Clerk

Prepared by Principal Secretary, Daniela Nilsson