

DRAFT

**Town of Concord
Board of Assessors Meeting Minutes
March 14, 2016**

Present: Cynthia Rainey, Chair, David Karr, Tory Lambert, Christian Fisher
Staff: Lane Partridge, Town Assessor, Carolyn Dee, Sr. Admin. Asst.
Others: Jane Hotchkiss, BOS Liaison, Edward Hines, Jeanne Griffith,
Henry Patterson and Claudine Kaplan

The meeting was called to order at 8:05 A.M.

Ms. Rainey explained the abatement process to the audience stating that Mr. Partridge would present his findings to the Board and then the applicant would have 5 minutes to add anything they would like the Board to know. The Board will then deliberate and vote on the application.

FY16 ABATEMENT APPLICATIONS

396 Thoreau St.

Mr. Partridge stated that the Board reviewed this property last year. This property is near the High School and the newly created turf field. Mr. Partridge stated that the property already has a \$60,700 reduction in the land value because of the field and he doesn't see that much has changed from last year to this year. Sales in the last few years have indicated that the property is in the correct neighborhood. Mr. Partridge is recommending denying the application.

Mr. Hines and Ms. Griffith who own the property were in attendance at the meeting. They stated that since last year new lights have been installed at the new field that has diminished the value of their property. Instead of the field being used 6 or 7 times a year as it was previously, it is now used every night until about 9:00 P.M. They also stated that the noise from the Public Address system and parking from the fields as well as students parking on the access road to the High School have diminished the desirability of their home to a potential buyer.

They currently have a 10% discount on the land value of their property which is comparable to properties that abut the railroad and Route 2. They also have the quiet enjoyment of the field as opposed to another property being built right behind them. It was suggested that we stick with the current 10% discount on the land value to be consistent with other property that receive a similar discount. Mr. Lambert suggested that because of the increase in the lighting at the field and the Public Address system being used more frequently that the discount be raised to 15% on the land value. The Board discussed the validity of the additional 5% discount and agreed that it was warranted. The Board proposed placing a 15% discount on the land value for FY16 and the new total value of the property would be \$803,700 decreased from \$834,000.

On a **MOTION** made by Mr. Lambert, seconded by Mr. Karr, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED to GRANT** the request for abatement as recommended by staff.

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109 Seymour St.

Mr. Partridge visited the property and noted that the house is at the bottom of a very steep grade similar to other properties on White Pond. The value of the property mainly lies in the land with the view factor being applied. The house is a small part of the property value. The house is heated by wood stoves which were added to the listing of the house after Mr. Partridge's visit. He also reduced the condition of the property from good to average lowering the property value by \$7,400. There were no adjustments made for the topography of the property.

Mr. Patterson and Ms. Kaplan the owner and resident of the property were in attendance at the meeting. They stated that the property value is diminished because the road is not maintained by the town, they currently have a septic system instead of sewer and they are not able to get a gas line to go into the property. They also talked about the pond being unusable last year because of the growth of algae. They believe the town is negligent in maintaining the land around the pond and because the pond is unusable this diminishes the value of their property.

Mr. Fisher asked who maintained that the pond was not able to be used? The Board stated that it was a big news story last summer as swimming and boating were not allowed on the pond because touching the water in any way would make a person sick. People were warned against letting their dogs drink the water and letting the water splash on them. They were told to wash it off immediately. This was due to the growth of a certain type of algae that produced a greenish color in the water and has the potential to make people sick. Mr. Fisher stated that although the pond was not able to be used last year he has to believe that it won't be polluted forever and that situation was just a temporary one. The Board also stated that although the pond was not able to be used for swimming you could still enjoy the quietness and beauty of it.

Mr. Lambert stated that although the property has a steep slope a number of houses on Seymour St. share that same characteristic and generally topographical factors do not warrant a discount in the land value.

The Board suggested a reduction in the value of the property by \$7,400 to account for changes to the value of the house.

On a **MOTION** made by Mr. Fisher, seconded by Mr. Lambert, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED** to **GRANT** the request for abatement as recommended by staff.

282 Commonwealth Ave.

Mr. Partridge stated that the applicant applied for abatement because on their property record card it states they have a free standing stove. They maintained that they do not have this feature in their property. Mr. Partridge visited the property and discovered that while they do not have a free standing stove they do have a fireplace that we did not previously have listed on the property card. Since the fire place has a higher value than a free standing stove when he made the adjustment to the property card the value of the property increased. This will be reflected in the FY17 property value. He is recommending denying the application.

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On a **MOTION** made by Mr. Lambert, seconded by Mr. Fisher, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED** to **DENY** the request for abatement as recommended by staff.

117 Seymour St.

Mr. Partridge stated that the applicant contends that the sales for 2014 do not support the increase in value of the property. The property was inspected and found to be in fair condition. There were also errors in the sketch which were corrected. Mr. Partridge recommended reducing the value of the property by \$27,900 with the total value of the property now being \$656,000.

On a **MOTION** made by Mr. Lambert, seconded by Mr. Karr, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED** to **GRANT** the request for abatement as recommended by staff.

REMAINING APPLICATIONS

300 Baker Ave.

Mr. Partridge has visited the property and is currently in discussions with the tax representative concerning the abatement application. Mr. Partridge is waiting for more information to be forwarded to him from the tax representative. The Board will deliberate on this application at the next meeting.

Mass Associates in Podiatry

Mr. Partridge has spoken with Dr. Weakland and is waiting for her to forward further information about the machinery and equipment located at her business for Personal Property tax purposes. The Board will deliberate on this application at the next meeting.

We have two other abatement applications that have not been voted on. We have not been able to contact them for an appointment to visit their property. We will continue to try to contact them but if we are not able to their applications will be deemed denied on May 1, 2016.

WHITE POND

The Board asked Mr. Partridge about whether a property that previously had an upgraded land factor on it suddenly degrades, such as what happened to White's Pond do we typically create a new neighborhood. Mr. Partridge stated that we have not done that in the past. We will just have to wait and see how the pond affects the sale values of properties in the future and what will happen to the pond in the future. Mr. Partridge stated that the properties on White's Pond typically are not tear downs but renovations. Although there could be wetlands issues with the Natural Resources Commission which could place conditions on the building done on the property it does not prevent construction on the property. We will continue to discuss this issue in the future.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday April 28, 2016 at 7:00 P.M. at 24 Court Lane.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 A.M.

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Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Dee
Sr. Administrative Assistant