

**Minutes of the Board of Assessors
Meeting of August 23, 2007**

A meeting of the Board of Assessors was held on Thursday, August 23, 2007 in the Auditorium at City Hall. The meeting was called to order at 8:20 AM by Chair Marylou Blaisdell.

Members Present

Kevin Moriarty

Dominic D'Antoni

Marylou Blaisdell

Assessing Staff Present

Angelo Marino

Gary Turgiss

Greg Turgiss

Cheryl Walley

Minutes of the Meeting:

Minutes for the meeting held on August 9, 2007 were approved unanimously.

Abatement Requests Presented:

Approvals/denials are available in the Assessor's Office.

Residential Appraisers Greg Turgiss and Gary Turgiss reviewed each of the abatements being presented which were filed for residential properties and answered any questions from the Board.

Appointments: none

The Board was presented with approximately 60 land use change tax bills for their signature. Mr. Angelo Marino, Chief Assessor, explained that lots are selling for \$120-150,000 for a 6,500 to 12,000 square foot lot. While investigating he came across a number of things, first of which was Gagnon Farms property which had been in current use. Putting lines on a paper and making a subdivision doesn't take it out of current use but there was no building permit filed and a change of the property was made by piling gravel on the properties that are in current use. This was cause to take it out of current use. Using Pictometry's images, we looked at all the properties that had a use change or had the earth disturbed and we removed each from current use. In the end we were at a point where it was less than ten acres so everything came out of current use. We did outreach because of the large dollar amount of tax that is being billed and informed the owner that we will be issuing land use change tax bills. They wanted to know if arrangements can be made or if a payment plan could be worked out. They were told this was out of the Assessing Department's hands and they would need to take that up with the Tax Collector. Since the use of each of these lots was changed as of 4/1/2007 the lots will be assessed at market value for 2007. The assessments will be increased from about \$400 a lot to about \$110,000 per lot. Mr. D'Antoni commented on how unusual this situation is because lots are typically taken out of current use in stages. Mr. Marino explained that in the past when a building permit is issued, the lots are then removed from current use and a land use change tax bill issued, however an examination of the facts shows we need to be a little more diligent and if it wasn't for Pictometry it may still have been overlooked. The Pictometry images are date-stamped November and December of 2006 and it was apparent there was activity. Mr. Marino clarified that the monies collected from land use change tax are put into the conservation fund and none will go to the general fund. He explained that we tried to get this changed last year and have half go to the general fund and half to the conservation fund. He said at that point he was projecting about \$300,000 per year that would be collected for land use change tax and the consensus amongst the aldermen was to keep putting the funds into the conservation fund since the projected dollar amount would not balance the budget if put into the general fund.

Mr. Marino directed the Board to a property spotlighted in the Nashua Telegraph for which one of the Board members at the last meeting questioned the low sale price. He told the Board that the assessment is just

\$12,000 lower than the sale price. Chair Blaisdell commented that the sale price is certainly low, so she would assume the house is in rough shape and in need of many repairs. Mr. Marino stated that apparently there is something that is driving the value down which has been recognized by our data, so he is happy about the assessment.

Mr. Marino advised that we are fairly close to completing our update. Based on the new educational funding we will be receiving and what we are able to do with valuations, this year, the tax rate is not going to change considerably. He predicts there will possibly be just under a 2% increase in the tax rate. Many of residential assessments will stay the same or be marginally reduced. Some may be increased marginally but not a lot of change will occur in the residential assessments. He said that there will be considerable changes in some of the commercial properties.

Mr. Marino said there is going to be a public meeting concerning valuations on September 17 at 7:00 PM just before the Board of Aldermen meeting that begins at 7:30 PM. This is an informational meeting for the Board of Aldermen to bring them up-to-date as well as inform the public of what is going on. We would put a press release in the newspaper and make the new assessments available online. He repeated that this will be a general informational session for the Board of Aldermen.

Mr. Marino informed the Board that Attorney David Connell has given notice to the City that he will be resigning his position as City Counsel in mid-September. We have not yet been informed who will fill this position. Most of the appeal cases he was handling have been settled or withdrawn and Attorney McNamee is representing us on the others.

The Aldermen have agreed with our escrowing request so as soon as that is passed reconsideration he intends on getting proposals for data verification once again.

Mr. Marino was asked which hotel sold for \$17,000,000 and he advised the Sheraton Hotel. The assessment is around \$15-16,000,000. He said the sale price came as a surprise. Mr. Marino has talked to their representative and is aware that they have actively been marketing the property for the past two years. The highest offers were in the \$10-12,000,000 range so when \$17,000,000 came in it was a surprise. He has been told that they are going to be putting another \$8,000,000 into it and it will be renamed the Radisson Hotel. He noted the assessment is close to the sale price. Another interesting thing is that one of the reasons they have been meeting with their representative was to determine income stream and this had been on a downward trend, but for this last period the income increased by \$900,000.

MOTION BY Dominic D'Antoni to adjourn at 9:22 AM.

SECONDED BY Kevin Moriarty.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

Transcribed by
Cheryl Walley
Department Coordinator