

Assessors Meeting Minutes
May 5, 2014

Meeting was held on Monday May 5, 2014 and called to order at 6 p.m. by Sandy Lilly

Present: Sandy Lilly (SL), Rick Chandler (RC) arrived at 6:10 p.m., Donna Sarro (DS), Jennifer Morse (JM)

SL welcomed new board members Donna Sarro to the board. Town Clerk Anne Dunne stopped in to swear in RC who was running late to the meeting. RC will make arrangements with the Town Clerk to be sworn in before the next meeting as a result the Town Clerk said that RC would not be able to vote in this meeting.

Appointments:

Ted Murray approached the BOA on behalf of the Congregational Church house located on Bear Swamp Road. Mr. Murray created and presented to the board a document that showed the changes that he found between the 2013 and 2014 property cards (Document 1). SL explained the inspection cycle and that Mayflower had measured and inspected the property in January of 2013 she pointed out the various changes to the card. These changes included changing the overall grade of the house and structure/space code changes. The abatement process was explained to Mr. Murray. JM will contact Samuel from Mayflower to set up an inspection of the property. Mr. Murray would like to be present and the current tenant needs notification of the inspection. JM to contact Mr. Murray once Samuel has made his schedule available.

Mr. Murray also spoke regarding debt exclusion and how to calculate the average increase per taxpayer before town meetings. JM to contact Alice Wozniak for the formula and will contact Mr. Murray with the information.

Howard Streeter Jr. - SL gave a history and location of Mr. Streeter's home. Mr. Streeter feels that the UCN (unfinished canopy) and yard items are overvalued. He is disputing that the UCN is outside space and not useable space. Samuel from Mayflower went to Mr. Streeter's home for an inspection and noted that the UCN has lighting and wiring and recommended that the space stay as is. The BOA voted to follow the recommendation of Mayflower and to deny the abatement. SL explained the options of appealing to the Appellate Tax Board and Mr. Streeter was given information on how to contact the ATB. SL explained the roles of Mayflower and the members of the Board. Mr. Streeter questioned the reasoning behind the vote and Samuel's qualifications. Discussion of the board resulted in the following protocol change; letters regarding the reasons for abatement will be included with all denial notices. RC would like to discuss more the structure values. SL told Mr. Streeter that Yard Items values are being looked at for FY 2015 across the board because several taxpayers had questioned the values. JM to email a copy of the April 14, 2014 minutes to Mr. Streeter once approved.

Reorganize Board: Tabled

Meeting Minutes:

The April 14, 2014 minutes have been accepted by SL. SL is the only current board member from the previous board.

Signatures: All Documents signed by SL and DS unless otherwise noted

Motor Vehicle Monthly List- April 2014 (Document 2)

Real Estate/Personal Property Monthly List- April 2014 (Document 3)

2007 MV Uncollectible Tax Monthly List (Document 4)

Old Business:

Old Outstanding Real Estate- Memo from the Collector (Document 5) - The previous board has discussed the memo from the Tax Collector and asked her to provide reasoning behind the abatements. Discussion about the tax collection process and unpaid taxes resulted in the board requesting that JM invite the tax collector to a future meeting. JM explained that the uncollectible abatement request is the result of the audit last year and a way to get the bills off the books. ***A motion was made by DS and seconded by SL to approved the abatements based on the reasons given. VOTE: SL- Aye, DS- Aye***

Lenny Roberts Parcel Joining Request - SL gave the history of Mr. Roberts request to join several parcels of land. RC stated that this might not be to the advantage of Mr. Roberts since it might affect the future of those parcels. This will be sent in a letter to Mr. Roberts with the request to show the board in writing the evidence to combine the parcels. Some of the parcels in question have different ownership.

Tax Map Discrepancies/June 2007 Assessing Department Review - JM explained that while discussing Mr. Roberts request to split land at the April 14, 2014 meeting former board member Peter Witan stated that more than one hundred lots had been changed in FY 2007 and the maps had never been corrected. SL will sit down with Mr. Wittanen to look at the current maps. The 2007 Assessing Department Review and letter to Tom Cranston stated that 100 of the closed parcels had been returned to the FY 2006 status but 34 parcels remained unchanged. A packet of documents was given to each board member that included the following; 2007 Assessing Department Review from the DOR (Document 6), Letter to TC from the DOR dated January 26, 2007 (Document 7), Minutes from January 7, 2008 (Document 8), Minutes from January 8, 2007 (Document 9), Minutes from December 18, 2006 (Document 10), Real Estate and Refund Report from 5/1/07 (Document 11), and 16 Parcel ID Changes from 2007 (Document 12). JM stated the reasoning for the past minutes was the notes to Board of Assessors policy. SL asked the rest of the board to review the documents for discussion at the next meeting.

CAI Contract – SL went over the FY 2015 budget information with the new members. Town Meeting approved the Online Query Manager from CAI. The work will begin after July 1, 2014 and property cards will be available online, pictures of the properties will not be available. ***The CAI contract for FY 2015 was signed by SL and DS.***

Sherry Jourdan- Garage/Storage Discussion - Ms. Jourdan had stopped by the office with a sketch of the garage/storage space in question. After abatement inspection by SL and Samuel from Mayflower the storage space was changed to GAR space. The reasoning for this change was the overhang garage door and car parked in the space. Ms. Jourdan wanted to make it clear that the space did have gravel flooring. After discussion of the board the space will remain coded GAR in both sections. JM provided the board with the FY 2014 sketch (Document 12) and the sketch as changed for FY 2015 (Document 13) along with Ms. Jourdan's sketch. (Document 14)

New Business:

Email regarding MassGIS enhancements - An email was received from Paul Nutting- Education and Outreach Coordinator for MassGIS regarding enhancements to the Town of Ashfield parcel mapping. (Document 15) CAI acted on the behalf of the BOA and was granted \$3000 for three enhancements to the towns MassGIS mapping. More than 172 communities applied for the grant and Ashfield was one of 132 granted. JM to contact CAI to find out what will be needed from the BOA to move forward with the project.

Wiedmann Forest Management Plan - Forest Management Plan reviewed and signed by SL (Document 16)

Other:

Cape Street- Property Ownership- Two abutting properties on Sears Road/Cape Street both think they own the same piece of land. JM has pulled the deeds and will be looking into the issue with an update for the next meeting.

Ashfield House LLC letter to Assessors (Received 5/5/14) - Letter regarding a copy of the petition to the Appellate Tax Board was received. (Document 18) SL read the letter and the attached petition and is waiting for approval from the Select Board to utilize the services of the Town Attorney.

Next Meeting: May 19 @ 6 p.m.

A motion was made by DS and seconded by SL to adjourn the meeting at 8:27 p.m.

VOTE: S.L. – Aye, DS- Aye

Submitted by:
Jennifer Morse
May 6, 2014

Document List (May 5, 2014)

1. Document in value changes presented by Ted Murray regarding Congregational Church property on Bear Swamp Road.
2. Motor Vehicle Monthly List - April 2014
3. Real Estate/Personal Property Monthly List - April 2014
4. 2007 Uncollectible Tax Monthly List
5. Outstanding Real Estate Tax Memo and 58.8 from Tax Collector
6. 2007 Assessing Department Review from DOR
7. Letter to Tom Cranston from DOR dated January 26, 2007
8. Minutes from January 7, 2008
9. Minutes from January 8, 2007
10. Minutes from December 18, 2006
11. Real Estate Refund Report from 5/1/07
12. 16 Parcel Changes from 2007
13. 2014 Sketch from 311 Cummington Road
14. 2013 Sketch from 311 Cummington Road
15. Sketch provided by owner 311 Cummington Road – Sherry Jourdan
16. Email regarding MassGIS Enhancements Grant from Paul Nutting
17. Wiedmann Forest Management Plan
18. Letter from Ashfield House LLC regarding Petition to ATB received 5/5/14

Approved: May 19, 2014 VOTE: 2-0-1