



Board of Civil Authority

Town of Hinesburg
10632 Route 116 Hinesburg VT 05461
802.482.2281 | hinesburg.org

Meeting Minutes - August 23, 2016

- Approved -

Tax Appeal Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Sheila Dodd, Gill Coates, Maureen Barnard, Lynn Gardner, Marie Gardner, Vicki Matthews, Lanny Dennison, Ken Brown, and Mary Hurlie. Also present was Sgt. Casco from Hinesburg PD.

Tax Appeal Meeting of **Edgar Welch** and Valerie Hunt for property located at **9 Maple Tree Lane**, Hinesburg

Meeting was called to order at 6:59 p.m. Gill administered the oath to Sheila and Ken who were not present at the meeting on 8/17.

For the record it was stated that this is a tax appeal hearing for Edgar Welch property at 9 Maple Tree Lane, property number 0005121.

We then went around the table and made introductions. It was stated that all members had been sworn in to hear appeals. Gill then administered the witnesses oath to Mr. Welch, Ms. Hunt and Mrs. Gardner.

It was stated that there would be 15 minutes for the assessor to present the town's position, 15 minutes for the appellants and 15 minutes for questions. This is a quasi-judicial proceeding therefore all evidence must be presented at the meeting. No outside communication and no additional evidence may be presented after the meeting. The BCA must send 3 people to inspect the property. If an inspection is not allowed, the appeal will be considered withdrawn. The BCA has 30 days to visit the property and 15 days after the visit to make a decision so a maximum of 45 days before a decision is made. The BCA may reduce, maintain or increase the appraisal. The question was asked about whether there was a conflict of interest having Lynn Gardner sit on the appeal when his wife, Marie, is the assessor. All agreed there is no conflict.

Assessor: Stated that she has had conversations with both Mr. Welch and Ms. Hunt. Changes to the assessed value were made at the lister's grievance. Specifically the Quality rating was changed from 3.5 to 3.0, the Condition was changed from Fair to Poor resulting in a change in the depreciation from 50%

to 57% and the Landscape site improvement was removed. This resulted in a \$27,300 reduction in the appraised value (from \$279,400 to \$252,100). No changes were made to the value of the land or the outbuildings.

Photos were presented that were taken in 2005. Mr. Welch and Ms. Hunt claimed that the house has deteriorated since then.

A photo of a house that had been removed from the Grand List was also presented. This house was in much worse shape, basically caved in.

Appellant: Ms. Hunt shared that the house has deteriorated incredibly. They have tried to take control but cannot get in. Mr. Welch's son, Glen, lives on the property and will not allow anyone in. He has posted a sign saying No Trespassing and stating that the owner/inhabitant is armed. He is mentally disabled, abuses drugs and alcohol and there are two warrants out for his arrest. His whole life is there and they do not want him to have to move.

Pipes froze several years ago and there is now water damage, mold, buckling floors ... Doors are left open in the house allowing rain to get in. Glen was told about the hearing and threatened to show up so Ms. Hunt requested a police officer be present. Glen lives in the garage. The roof leaks and the floor is burdened with stuff.

At this point Mr. Welch and Ms. Hunt believe it would be impossible to fix the house. It would need to be completely gutted. There is no heat and no electricity in the house. No electricity in the garage.

They appreciated the \$27,300 reduction but here hoping for more. Probably 150,000-160,000 of work to be done but they can't get in.

Questions:

How long have they owned it? Since 1986.

What is the minimum lot size? Can it be subdivided to separate the house and garage? Answer: No.

Utilities in the garage? A woodstove on the 2nd floor. He may have a generator but no utilities are on. What about sewage? They do not know. Does he use the house? He is in and out of the house. Stores water there.

Ken stated that this is clearly a sad and tragic story but questions the relevance to the tax valuation. Ms. Hunt said they are paying taxes on a property that continues to degrade in value.

Question about what specifically they disagree with or would like to see changed. Answer: Barn has deteriorated more than it was. Porches have degraded. Mary asked what they think it should be assessed for. In 2013 Fay Associates assessed it at \$250,000 and they believe it has degraded since then.

Question about whether we will be able to inspect. Mr. Welch said we will but Chief Koss or another officer should accompany the inspectors.

The inspection team was chosen as Gill, Lynn and Sheila. The plan is to meet Thursday at 5pm at the Town Hall and the team and a Hinesburg Police Officer will go to the property.

There was a motion to continue the meeting until August 29th which was approved by the attendees.