

**Town of Concord
Board of Assessors Meeting Minutes
February 11, 2021**

Present: Tom Matthews, Chair, William Herring, Susan Livingston and Brendan Kemeza
Staff: Lane Partridge, Town Assessor, Carolyn Dee, Sr. Administrative Assistant
Others: Susan Bates, Select Board Liaison, Kathy Cuocolo, Finance Committee Liaison, Louis Salemy, Steven Irza and Dave Mackey.

The meeting was called to order at 4:01 P.M.

Mr. Matthews read the Zoom Conference statement provided to all Concord Boards and Committees for a zoom meeting.

“In accordance with Governor Baker’s executive order permitting virtual meetings during the COVID pandemic, the Board of Assessors is conducting this meeting today, February 11, 2021 at 4:01 P.M. Eastern Time on the Zoom platform and in accordance with the Town’s Policy Directive and Guidelines issued on April 1, 2020 and amended on May 7, 2020. I ask that all board members, town staff, and presenters activate their video and mute their microphone unless they have something to say or are participating in committee dialogue. This meeting is being recorded and will be available for later viewing on the Town’s website. All committee votes will be taken via roll call. We will start with an attendance roll call. I will announce your name, please reply. For members of the public, please unmute yourself when I’ve opened the meeting to public comment.”

Mr. Matthews took the attendance:

| | |
|------------------|-----|
| Ms. Dee - | Aye |
| Mr. Partridge - | Aye |
| Mr. Kemeza - | Aye |
| Mr. Herring - | Aye |
| Ms. Livingston - | Aye |
| Mr. Matthews - | Aye |

ABATEMENT APPLICATIONS

Mr. Matthews explained the procedures for reviewing this year’s abatement applications. The Board will review the application and the Town Assessor will make a recommendation. There will be no public comment from the applicant at this time as the Board will make a decision based on the evidence presented in the application. If the Board has a question for the applicant, and the applicant is present, they will ask them directly at the time.

363 MATTISON DR.

The applicant raised the question of how does the property value increase when there have not been any improvements to the property? In his explanation the owner compared his home to properties that sold in 2020. He compared his home to a sale of a property at 203 Mattison Drive which has a sale price of \$205 per square foot. The average price per square foot of living space is \$227 per square foot.

The applicant questioned whether the square footage of a finished basement is included in the living area of the building and the answer is no. A finished basement is valued separately because it is not as valuable as above ground space. To include a finished basement in the analysis of living space would produce an incorrect value.

Mr. Partridge provided the Board with the following information.

No Major Improvements: Inflation of the value of a real property can happen without a physical change to the property. The Real Estate market has been on a steady increase since 2011. The recession of 2007 reduced value, about 10% and they remained level for about 4 years and then steadily increased.

How we determine square footage: All the comparable properties that have finished basements are valued as such. However, finished basement area is not part of the living space. It is valued separately, because it is not as valuable as space on the above ground floors. To do an analysis using basement space as living space produces an incorrect value.

The valuation of real estate is generally more complicated than applying a price per square foot of living space to the living area of a home. The factors that go into our model are numerous. The main ones are land area, building area (including living area, garage area, porches, patios, unfinished space, etc.) The quality of construction, condition of the property, age, style of home, number of bathrooms, detached structures (pools, sheds garages, etc.)

Another important factor is also the principle of diminishing return. The larger a house is the less per square foot of valuation. The opposite is also true the smaller the size the greater the price per square foot. This is evident in the values in the Mattison Drive area.

Sold Properties: The valuation of property for assessment purposes is set in State Law and is valued in arears. The current tax year is fiscal 2021. The date of valuation is January 1, 2020. The sale used are those that occurred in calendar 2019. Using sales that occurred in 2020 is for tax valuation in the future.

The Board stated that this is a 12,000 square foot home and it is not accurate to use a price per square foot on a large home like this. Our model is working as we have adjusted it to account for larger homes like this one. This property was fully inspected in September 2017 and the property record card is correct. The Board stated that the

valuation model is working and the value should remain the same. Mr. Partridge recommended to deny the application for abatement.

On a **MOTION** made by Mr. Herring and seconded by Ms. Livingston it was **VOTED to DENY** the abatement for 363 Mattison Dr. as recommended by staff.

Mr. Matthews – Aye
Mr. Kemeza – Aye
Ms. Livingston - Aye
Mr. Herring - Aye

20 ADIN DR

Mr. Partridge stated that this property sold in 2019 for \$1,764,000. The property value for Fiscal Year 2021 is \$1,697,400 which is 96% of the sale price in 2019. The Board indicated that Sales in this neighborhood are selling above the assessed value. This property was built in 2018 and there is a demand for new construction properties in town. The model is working for this property. Mr. Partridge recommendation is to deny the application for abatement.

On a **MOTION** made by Ms. Livingston and seconded by Mr. Herring it was **VOTED to DENY** the abatement for 20 Adin Dr. as recommended by staff.

Mr. Matthews – Aye
Ms. Livingston – Aye
Mr. Herring - Aye
Mr. Kemeza - Aye

838 BARRETT'S MILL RD

Mr. Partridge stated that the property was inspected in January 2021 as part of the cyclical inspection process. As a result of the inspection it was noted that a garage on the property, with living space above, was incorrectly listed. The condition of the property was decreased to average and the garage structure, with living space above, property type was changed to a Ranch from a Cape Cod style. These changes resulted in a decrease in the assessment of \$114,400 resulting in a new value of \$853,500. Mr. Partridge is recommending to grant the application for abatement.

On a **MOTION** made by Mr. Herring and seconded by Mr. Kemeza it was **VOTED to APPROVE** the abatement application for 838 Barretts Mill Rd. as recommended by staff.

Mr. Matthews – Aye
Mr. Herring – Aye
Ms. Livingston - Aye
Mr. Kemeza - Aye

102 BLACK HORSE DR

Mr. Partridge stated that this property sold in 2019 for \$852,608. As is the Board’s policy when a sale is used in the analysis for the Fiscal Year they will grant an abatement to the sales price. In this case the abatement would be for \$59,792 resulting in a new value of \$852,608. Mr. Partridge recommended to grant the application for abatement.

On a **MOTION** made by Mr. Kemeza and seconded by Mr. Herring it was **VOTED** to **APPROVE** the abatement application for 102 Black Horse Dr. as recommended by staff.

- Mr. Matthews – Aye
- Mr. Kemeza – Aye
- Mr. Herring - Aye
- Ms. Livingston - Aye

9 DUNBAR WAY

This property was inspected in February, 2020 and this resulted in minor changes to the sketch which did result in a small change in value. This property is one of the largest units in the condominium complex with a Grade of 4. There are many affordable units in this complex but this is not one of them. This property is valued correctly. Mr. Partridge recommended to deny the application for abatement.

On a **MOTION** made by Mr. Herring and seconded by Ms. Livingston it was **VOTED** to **DENY** the abatement application for 9 Dunbar Way as recommended by staff.

- Mr. Matthews – Aye
- Mr. Kemeza – Aye
- Mr. Herring - Aye
- Ms. Livingston - Aye

39 GARFIELD RD

Mr. Partridge stated that this property sold in 2019 for \$1,792,000. As is the Board’s policy when a sale is used in the analysis for the Fiscal Year they will grant an abatement to the sales price. In this case the abatement would be for \$68,200 resulting in a new value of \$1,792,000. Mr. Partridge recommended to grant the application for abatement.

On a **MOTION** made by Ms. Livingston and seconded by Mr. Herring it was **VOTED** to **APPROVE** the abatement for 39 Garfield Rd. as recommended by staff.

- Mr. Matthews – Aye
- Mr. Herring – Aye
- Ms. Livingston - Aye
- Mr. Kemeza - Aye

68 GREAT MEADOWS RD

Mr. Partridge stated that the Board has maintained a value on this property of \$3,800,000 for the past 5 years. Since that time the model has been steadily decreasing to the Appellate Tax Board Value from 2016. This year the Board decided to let the model value the property as with all other properties.

The Board stated that they wanted to let the model value the property as they believe the property is worth \$4,058,300. The Board commented that the original assessment 5 years ago was high. The ATB value was below market and that the model over the past 5 years has been coming down on the large homes and is now reflecting the market. The location of the property is desirable as buyers are drawn to our community for the walkability factor to downtown is valuable. This property is valued correctly in comparison to other properties in the area. Mr. Partridge recommended to deny the application for abatement.

On a **MOTION** made by Ms. Livingston and seconded by Mr. Herring it was **VOTED** to **DENY** the abatement for 68 Great Meadows Rd. as recommended by staff.

- Mr. Matthews – Aye
- Mr. Herring – Aye
- Mr. Kemeza - Aye
- Ms. Livingston - Aye

224 MUSTERFIELD RD

Mr. Partridge stated that this property sold in 2019 for \$1,919,000. As is the Board’s policy when a sale is used in the analysis for the Fiscal Year they will grant an abatement to the sales price. In this case the abatement would be for \$491,600 resulting in a new value of \$1,919,000. Mr. Partridge recommended to grant the application for abatement.

On a **MOTION** made by Ms. Livingston and seconded by Mr. Herring it was **VOTED** to **GRANT** the abatement for 224 Musterfield Rd. as recommended by staff.

- Mr. Matthews – Aye
- Ms. Livingston – Aye
- Mr. Kemeza - Aye
- Mr. Herring - Aye

250 OLD BEDFORD RD

Mr. Partridge stated that this property was purchased by the Concord Children’s Center Inc., a tax exempt organization, in January 2020. The qualification date for granting tax exempt status, for this Fiscal Year, is July 1, 2020. This property should be exempt for Fiscal Year 2021. They now have 2 years to own and occupy the property before it will be declared not exempt. After the 2 years if the property is not occupied by the organization then it will become taxable until such time as it is occupied by the

organization. The staff will write them a letter explaining this when they send them the abatement certificate. Mr. Partridge recommended to grant the application for abatement.

On a **MOTION** made by Ms. Livingston and seconded by Mr. Herring it was **VOTED** to **APPROVE** the abatement for 250 Old Bedford Rd. as recommended by staff.

Mr. Matthews – Aye
Mr. Herring – Aye
Mr. Kemeza - Aye
Ms. Livingston - Aye

537 OLD BEDFORD RD

The applicant stated that the reason for applying for the abatement was financial due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We have sent them some information regarding exemptions they may be eligible for and informed them that the deadline for filing Exemption Applications for Fiscal Year 2021 is April 1, 2021. The value of the property is correct and a real estate abatement is not the way to handle this issue. Mr. Partridge recommended to deny the application for abatement.

On a **MOTION** made by Ms. Livingston and seconded by Mr. Herring it was **VOTED** to **DENY** the abatement for 537 Old Bedford Rd. as recommended by staff.

Mr. Matthews – Aye
Mr. Herring – Aye
Mr. Kemeza - Aye
Ms. Livingston - Aye

20 FLINT RD

Mr. Partridge stated he has made an appointment to see the property at 20 Flint Rd. and will present the application to the Board at their next meeting.

BOARD COMMENTS

The staff will try to present 10 to 15 applications to the Board at another meeting. Ms. Livingston stated that the Board is working very well as a team and the Board agreed.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting which was originally scheduled for February 25, 2021 has been rescheduled for February 23, 2021 at 4:00 P.M. by Zoom Conferencing.

ADJOURNMENT

On a **MOTION** made by Ms. Livingston seconded by Mr. Herring, it was **APPROVED** by roll call vote:

Mr. Matthews - Aye

Ms. Livingston - Aye
Mr. Herring - Aye
Mr. Kemeza - Aye

to **ADJOURN** the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:49 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn H. Dee
Sr. Administrative Assistant