

AD HOC TAXATION/ASSESSMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

FEBRUARY 8, 2011, 9:00 A.M., COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Present: Committee Members Robert Manchester (chairman), Robert Dillon, Joel Hellmann, Joop Nagtegaal (secretary) and Donald Nessing

Also present: Peter DeAngelis, Town Manager, Michael Minardi, Tax Assessor

Guests: Richard Nagle, President, and Bob Battey, Project Manager, Appraisal Resource Revaluation Group

Also in attendance was June Speakman, Town Council President, for Jeff Brenner, Ad Hoc Committee Liaison on the Town Council.

Meeting called to order at 9:02 A.M. by Bob Manchester

The minutes of the meeting of January 18 were approved with one modification.

Since Richard Nagle and Bob Battey were present, the Committee agreed to start with a discussion of the progress report provided by Appraisal Resource.

Bob Battey said that the sales data have been collected and are now being reviewed to determine which sales will be included and which excluded. In principle, all MLS sales will be included. Foreclosures and short sales are usually excluded, although if short sales are reasonably close to or over the assessed value they will be examined further to see whether they can be used. There was some further discussion about short sales, and Bob Dillon pointed out that in some cases the bank would forgive the remainder of the loan and in other cases not. This can certainly have an effect on the sale price, since in the first

case the seller has no interest in increasing the price whereas in the second case the seller will want to fetch the best possible price. Bank sales will be examined and will be included if the bank was not under pressure to sell quickly.

Bob Battey said that they started to work with Michael on the neighborhood definitions, and suggested that input from the Committee would be desired soon. He suggested that the Committee take a look at the current neighborhood definitions and suggest where changes would be appropriate. Upon asked, Michael said that he would try to get large maps with the current neighborhoods to the Committee.

There was further discussion about whether the word “neighborhood” has the same meaning in a revaluation as in “normal” language. It was agreed that there is a difference, and that “neighborhood” in a revaluation specifically refers to (land) valuation.

Nevertheless, the word neighborhood is quite a settled concept in a revaluation so everyone will continue to use that word.

Joop handed out a memo with a map with his thoughts how Barrington could be subdivided in neighborhoods. Joop said he wanted to hand this out now since he will not be able to attend the coming two meetings.

Bob Battey said that property inspections have moved slowly because of the adverse weather conditions. Nevertheless Appraisal Resource will set up office in Town Hall on Wednesday February 9.

Bob Battey also stated that the conversion of the Vision data to Patriot data has been completed and is being checked for errors and inconsistencies.

On a question from Bob Manchester, Bob Battey confirmed that for the 12/31/2008 revaluation, Vision Appraisal had to do a manual entry of the existing field data in the

Vision system. Bob Manchester then asked whether Appraisal Resource would do any accuracy check on the data entered by Vision Appraisal. Bob Battey said that this was outside the scope of the current work.

Joop then presented some evidence provided by Lisa Browning related to two high end property sales, where one sale occurred early in 2009 but where the P&S agreement was signed in the middle of 2008, and one sale occurred in early in 2011 but the P&S agreement was signed in November 2010. Lisa had sent the data with her comment to Bob Manchester and Joop, although Bob hadn't seen it because of problems with his email server. Richard said he had received a copy of this email from Lisa, and he circulated the email.

This led to a discussion of how this kind of comment should be handled. There was initially a suggestion that citizens should correspond directly with Appraisal Resources, but Richard said that people always send comments to the Appraisal company and that this cannot be stopped easily. After some discussion, it was agreed that all parties that received comments (including the Town Manager, Appraisal Resource and individual Committee members) would pass such emails to the Assessor, and that the Assessor would distribute the information to the Committee.

The Committee then moved on to a discussion of the progress of hiring the consultant. Peter reported that so far three candidates had been interviewed (with Bob Manchester and Joel present), and that he hoped that the remaining candidate (Peter Scotti) could be interviewed soon. There was a brief discussion about the role of the consultant. Richard Nagle said that he knew all four candidates personally and that Appraisal Resource would have no problem working with either of them.

Joel commented that he had learned a lot during the interviews, and that he came to realize that the Assessing Board of Review does sometimes make questionable decisions. There was agreement that, since the ABR consists of non-professionals and receives virtually no training, that the decision making process is not perfect. There was agreement that this would be a subject that should be discussed further at a later date. In the meantime, the Committee's goal should be to make sure that the revaluation would be as accurate as possible so that there would not be much work for the ABR.

The Committee then moved on to the development of standards, and Bob Manchester asked Richard whether he had any suggestions. Richard referred to the standards on the website of the International Association of Assessing Officers (www.iaao.org). All agreed to take a look at what was available on this website.

The agenda for the next meeting was discussed, and the following topics were proposed, in addition to the usual progress report by Appraisal Resource:

- Neighborhood definitions
- Consultant update
- Review of sales data

The meeting adjourned at 10:17AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Joop Nagtegaal, secretary