

Carlisle Board of Assessors Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting date: Wednesday, February 22, 2023
Town Hall, Heald Conference Room
66 Westford St.
Carlisle, MA 01741



BOA members in attendance:

- Ken Mostello, Chair
- Karen Yeyinmen
- David Boardman

Others attending:

- Principal Assessor, Brian Macdonald

Motioned for approval: Mr. Mostello

Second: Mr. Boardman

Roll call vote: 3-0

Date approved: March 7, 2023

Public meeting called to order at 8:00am.

Abatement timetable and process

- Mr. Macdonald reported that a total of 90 abatement applications were filed by Carlisle residents in FY23. This includes 60 from deck house owners and 30 from others.
- Mr. Macdonald indicated that his inspections of properties in abatement applications are underway. He is scheduling inspections on Tuesdays and Thursdays when possible, to allow time between inspections to write up the appraisals.
- Mr. Mostello reminded the Board that all abatement filers received a letter outlining nine criteria that the Board uses in considering abatement requests. He suggested we use the nine points outlined in this letter as a sort of "scorecard" in the abatement review to standardize the process.
- The Board agreed to meet weekly until all applications have been reviewed to ensure timely consideration of applications

Discuss plan for advisory group on Deck Houses.

- Mr. Mostello shared that he has identified five residents who are willing to serve on a volunteer Deck House Advisory Group. He then engaged the board in discussion of different pathways for establishing the group as he understood them per conversations with the Town Administrator, Ryan McLane and review of relevant laws.
- Based on this discussion, Ms. Yeyinmen motioned to have Town Administrator McLane appoint a deck house advisory group under the direction of the Select Board with membership to include: the Town Administrator or his delegate, the Principal Assessor, a member of the Board of Assessors, a member of the Select Board (if willing), and five deck house owners to be recommended by the Board of Assessors. The purpose of this group is to understand the deck house style and its classification in Carlisle. Mr. Boardman seconded. Motion carried 3-0.
- Board members agreed to rotate their membership on the working group. Mr. Mostello volunteered to attend the first meeting to set ground rules under the law, share the data we have so far, and understand on which points the Board and Deck House owners agree and disagree with regard to classification and valuation of deck houses.
- Some questions the Board would like the deck house advisory group to address include:
 - How should Carlisle classify deck houses for assessment purposes?
 - Should we keep this style classification distinct from contemporaries?
 - What market-relevant criteria can/should we use to classify a home as having a deck house style (e.g. architectural features, Brand name, architect?)
 - How can we specify more precisely which homes qualify for this classification?
 - Alternatively, should we be less precise and combine the deck houses and contemporaries in a single classification?
 - If we combine these styles, should we consider adding a modifier for “post and beam construction”?
 - Does Brand matter to value? How is brand established/certified to buyers?
 - If built by another company using Deck House blue prints, is it a deck house style?
 - If built by the Deck House company, is it automatically a deck house style regardless of architectural features?
 - Does the custom/organic setting in the landscape and walkout finished basement typical of deck houses carry market value, especially in the context of COVID? Is this unique to the deck house style?
- The Board discussed sequencing of abatements and advisory group activity. Members agreed that both can move forward in parallel since any changes to classification process that are shaped by the advisory group will be forward looking. The only remedy for requesting changes to FY23 taxes is to file an abatement application.
- Ms. Yeyinmen requested clarification on scope of authority of the advisory group. Mr. Mostello confirmed that the role of an advisory group is to make recommendations.
- Mr. Macdonald pointed out that a good test of any forward looking recommendation would be to re-run FY23 data through revised models in a “what if” scenario, purely

educational, to get a sense of how the recommended changed might affect future valuations.

Update on Hiring an Administrative Assistant to the Assessor

- Ms. Yeyinmen and Mr. Macdonald shared highlights from interviews they had jointly conducted with three candidates for the Assistant to the Assessor role. Strengths of the recommended candidate include municipal assessment experience, strong analytic and administrative skills, and demonstrated initiative.
- Mr. Boardman introduced a motion to ratify the hire for Assistant Assessor who was presented with a conditional offer following the interviews, pending board approval. Mr. Mostello seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Minutes approval from prior meetings

- Mr. Mostello motioned to approve the minutes from the BOA meeting on January 24. Mr. Boardman Seconded. Carried 3-0.
- Ms. Yeyinmen motioned to approve the minutes from the BOA meeting on January 31. Mr. Mostello seconded. Carried 2-0 with Mr. Boardman Abstaining.
- Mr Boardman motioned to approve minutes from the BOA meeting on February 14. Mr. Mostello Seconded. Carried 3-0.

Mr. Boardman motioned to enter executive session for discussion of applications for abatement. Ms. Yeyinmen seconded. Carried 3-0. Meeting relocated to Nickles conference room.

Public meeting adjourned 9:00am.

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Second: Mr. Boardman

Roll call vote: 3-0

Date approved: March 7, 2022

Executive session called to order at 9:00am.

Abatement Discussions

Mr. Macdonald stated that he was bringing only non-deck house applications to the Board today.

Application #1

Owner withdrew application

Motion to DENY abatement: Mr. Mostello

Second: Mr. Boardman

Carries: 3-0

Application #50

118 Pheasant Hill Lane

Owner denied inspection, application withdrawn.

Motion to DENY abatement: Mr. Boardman

Second: Mr. Mostello

Carries: 3-0

Application #6

Excess land valued at \$3900

Inspection found value is full and fair

Motion to DENY abatement: Mr. Boardman

Second: Ms. Yeyinmen

Carries: 3-0

Application #7

15 Garrison Way

Finished basement shown on property card but inspection found no finished basement.

Removed finished basement from card and recalculated for reduction in value of \$52,200 and associated reduction in taxes of \$738.63.

Motion to GRANT abatement based on recalculated value: Ms. Yeyinmen

Second: Mr. Mostello

Carries: 3-0

Application #9

81 East Street

Minor changes to descriptive data based on property inspection. Recalculated for reduction in value of \$9,100

Motion to GRANT abatement based on recalculated value: Mr. Boardman

Second: Ms. Yeyinmen

Carries: 3-0

Application #77

88 Forest Park Drive

Inspection resulted in multiple changes to property card, some adding value and some reducing. Recalculation found net valuation higher than FY23 valuation submitted.

Motion to DENY abatement: Mr. Mostello

Second: Mr. Boardman

Carries: 3-0

Rutland Contemporary

Property card shows 10 acres but inspection found parcel owned by applicant is 5 acres.

Research found changes to adjacent parcel ownership were not updated to database.

Recalculated for reduction in value of \$111,400, of which \$50,000 is land.

Motion to GRANT abatement as recalculated: Mr. Boardman

Second: Ms. Yeyinmen

Carries: 3-0

Meeting adjourned 10:00am