

2020 Grievance Hearings

Wednesday, July 01, 2020 – 9:00 am to 1:00 pm

Thursday, July 02, 2020 – 9:00 am to 1:00 pm (additional date if needed)

Draft Minutes

Due to COVID-19, 2020 grievance hearings were held via Zoom or In-Person in adherence with health guidelines for Tracy Hall. Zoom was available to the public during all hearings.

Present: Listers: Cheryl A. Lindberg, Pamela Smith, and Doug Wilberding; Contract Assessor: Spencer Potter; Administrative Clerk: Masaki Schuette

The hearings were called to order at 9:00 am.

Note: Before each grievant presented their case, Lindberg explained the process of the hearing and also the process they could take next if they disagree with the Listers' decision, to be sent by letter on or before July 9, 2020.

Grievance # 1 – Steven Bachner presented his case in-person.

Parcel ID# 05-038-000: 22 Norford Lake Road

They have been living in Norwich 3 decades and have tried to sell their property over the past 4 years, but no one has been interested. After consulting with a realtor during the 4 years, they concluded that the issue was the sale price. They brought it down to \$499,500 before they pulled out of market due to COVID-19. The grievant believes the Town's assessment of \$611,800 does not reflect the current market value. However, the grievant feels the land value is ok; house value is his concern as it is dated for today's market. He requests we lower the house value.

Grievance #2 – Daniel Gottlieb presented his case through Zoom.

Parcel ID# 11-043-000, 112 Bradley Hill Road

Per the grievant, there are 3 major issues: 1) the exterior of the house is rated as average+ on property record card data, but there are substantial areas with wood rot that require complete removal and replacement. It was not purchased with these conditions. 2) There is a long-standing boundary dispute and a cattle fence that is 1' from the house covered with no-trespassing signs. Listers mentioned that he could bring this issue to the Zoning/ Planning department. 3) There is an apartment in the house and the allocation of the total house value to the apartment is much too low. Listers explained to him that each property owner is responsible for filing the allocation of business use within the homestead through filing the Homestead Declaration HS-122 to the State of Vermont.

Grievance #3 – Glyn Elwyn presented his case though Zoom.

Parcel ID# 11-126-000, 720 Union village Road

He appealed to Listers that his Housesite value was previously assessed at \$228,000, but he thinks that it should be around \$150,000. He submitted comparison properties for the Listers to look at. Also he asked the Listers the reason why his Housesite value went up \$304,500 in one year. Is it possible that there is a coding error?

Another question he asked was the assessment of Homestead Value: it was \$460,500 in 2019, and it went up to \$763,800. There were no changes to the property except subdivisions, which have not been sold yet; however are currently being marketed for sale; therefore, he thinks that the sub-divided parcels should not impact a change in value.

Grievance #4 –Dorothy Farrell presented her case through Zoom phone

Parcel ID# 11-077-200, 373 Town Farm Road

Farrell asked Listers the reason why her total real assessment went up to \$291,900 in 2020 from \$222,300 in 2019. She did not add any acreage; she actually reduced acreage by 1.18. Listers pointed out the additional parcel on the other side of the road and she acknowledged it was a separate parcel.

Grievance #5 – Charles & Connie Bowdoin presented their case through Zoom phone

Parcel ID# 11-116-000, 239 Goodrich Four Corners Road

Bowdoins asked the reason why their 2020 assessment increased by \$1,500. Bowdoins explained that they had added a 2 x 4 addition to their front entry way, which is not closed in and there is no door. All the materials are recycled items, so they feel this is over assessed and request a reduction.

Grievance #6 –Marc & Christina Aquila presented their case through Zoom

Parcel ID# 11-041-000, 633 New Boston Road

The Aquilas appealed the building value that they received for the new house they built over the past 2 years. It is a 3-bedroom, 2.5 bathroom house with an attached 2-bedroom, 1.5 bathroom in-law apartment on 2.9 acres. They stated it was 95% complete as of April 1, 2020. Per the grievants, the hard costs to date total \$403,921.00 including the improvement to the land. They submitted the list of comparable properties to their new house based on square footage, as well as number of bedrooms for the Listers to review. They did not grieve the land value, just the building value. They did not grieve their parcel at 688 New Boston Road.

Grievance #7 –Thomas & Samantha Candon presented their case through Zoom, along with Jack Candon, their attorney, also through Zoom

Parcel ID# 05-075-100, 1183 Union village Road

The Candons purchased the 30.63 acres of land adjacent to their property on Union Village Road for \$60,000 on December 9th, 2019 from Anne Montgomery. She had tried to sell this land between February 2009 and November 2019 with no success. The Candons offered to buy the acreage for \$60,000 through an arm's-length sale that involved a realtor. They believe that Town's assessment of \$178,000 is above fair market value because there is a serious topographic restriction under the zoning regulations for development of the land. Their purchase of the land sets the fair market value at \$60,000. The Candons also submitted case-law **Wilde v. Town of Norwich** (August 11, 1989) to support their request to lower the value to \$60,000.

Grievance #8 – Great River Hydro, LLC

Parcel ID# 70-006-000, Written Grievance only. (No one was present)

The letter received by the Listers states that the assessment is not a fair and reasonable valuation based on acceptable appraisal standards. Their request is that the assessment be lowered.

Having no other grievances, Smith **motioned** (2nd Wilberding) to recess the 2020 grievance hearings on July 1st, 2020 at 11:50 am and to resume again on July 2nd, 2020 at 9:00 AM. **Vote was unanimous.**

Continuation of Grievance Hearings

July 2, 2020

A motion was made by Smith (2nd Wilberding) to re-open the 2020 grievance hearings at 9:05 AM.

The Listers confirmed, along with Schuette, that no additional grievances were received by 4:30 pm on July 1, 2020. Smith **moved** (2nd Wilberding) to close the 2020 grievance hearings. **Vote was unanimous.**

The Listers and Contract Assessor (who joined by Zoom) went into the Deliberation session at 9:10 AM. The Deliberation session ended at 11:30 AM.

Next meeting – July 8th, 2020 1:00 PM, at Listers' office, Tracy Hall. Public will be invited through Zoom. Agenda will include grievance hearings decisions and the mailing of the decision letters, the review and mailing of new change of assessment letters, invoice from NEMRC and Assessors' June report and invoice.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl A. Lindberg, Chair

Board of Listers