

2021 Grievance Hearings

Wednesday, June 16, 2021 – 11:00 am to 3:30 pm

Draft Minutes

Due to COVID-19, 2020 grievance hearings were held via Zoom or In-Person. Zoom was available to the public during all hearings.

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

- 1) **Call to Order** – The Chair called the hearings to order at 10:58 am.
- 2) **Public Comments** – None present.
- 3) **Grievance Hearings** – 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 June 23, 2021.

Grievance # 1 – Keith Brown presented his case in-person.

Parcel ID# 20-002.000: 256 Hopson Road

Mr. Brown submitted a Deed drawn up by his attorney on May 8, 2019 merging a 5.0 acre parcel and a 4.67 acre parcel. This Deed was recorded in the Town Clerk's office on February 1, 2021. Mr. Brown's attorney has advised him that there is no requirement to obtain a Zoning approval prior to filing a Deed to merge these parcels. The Listers advised Mr. Brown that they will seek further clarification from the Norwich Zoning Administrator on Norwich's regulations before rendering a decision on this grievance. Mr. Brown also indicated that the property record card is inaccurate. The dwelling does not have a basement.

Grievance #2 – Alexander Fuld and Shoshana Hort – represented by Jonathan Teller-Elsberg, Esq. in person.

Parcel ID# 20-069-000, 149 Beaver Meadow Road

Jonathan Teller-Elsberg presented the grievance on behalf of his clients, Alexander Fuld and Shoshana Hort. There was a question regarding the change of assessment based upon "adding 2 parcels" as stated on the Change in Appraisal letter, when the action that prompted the changes in the Deed were property line adjustments to the two additional parcels owned by Fuld and Hort. One property line adjustment transferred .08 acres to an abutter at 179 Beaver Meadow Rd. The second property line adjustment was to bring this parcel back into a conforming lot per Norwich zoning regulations. These two additional lots are now in compliance as housesite lots per Norwich zoning regulations according to Mr. Teller-Elsberg.

Grievance #3 – Suzanne Leiter presented her case in person.

Parcel ID# 05-023.000

Suzanne Leiter presented documentation concerning several deficiencies she perceives to a second dwelling on their parcel. Some of these deficiencies relate to the exterior, heating, insulation, removal of interior walls, as well as the quality of the bathroom and kitchen. Currently, the dwelling is not in livable condition.

Ms. Leiter stated that it is the goal to eventually return the dwelling to a condition suitable for family members to occupy during visits. Ms. Leiter thinks that the current value of the dwelling is \$75,000. The dwelling is open and available for the Listers to do an onsite inspection.

Grievance #4 –Allan Waters presented his case in person

Parcel ID# 11-126.100, 00 Union Village Road

Mr. Waters purchased a 3-parcel subdivision on December 11, 2020 for \$160,000. Mr. Waters stated that he bought the parcel to construct a home that he would rent to his daughter. The housesite would be on what is currently designated as “Parcel 1”. Mr. Waters has not made a decision on whether he will merge these 3 parcels into 1 parcel at some future date. Mr. Waters also stated that there are wetland issues that need to be addressed to allow access to the property. If only 1 dwelling is going to be constructed, a culvert would suffice for access at an approximate cost of \$25,000. If more than 1 dwelling is to be constructed, a bridge would need to be constructed at an approximate cost of \$70,000. Mr. Waters also raised concerns about the cost of site preparation prior to construction. Mr. Waters cited *Wilde v. Town of Norwich* and stated his belief that the assessment should be reduced to the \$160,000 he paid.

Grievance #5 – Thomas and Cindia Randall presented their case in writing (no one was present)

Parcel ID# 05-014-100, 1268 New Boston Road

The Randalls transferred 8.3 acres to their son Erik. They felt that the assessment to the new parcel now owned by Erik is correct. Using the assessment on Erik’s acreage, the Randalls calculated what they felt was the reduction they should have received on this parcel. They requested a reduction \$43,871, instead of the reduction of \$22,200 stated in their Change in Appraisal letter.

Grievance #6 – Eric Picconi presented his case in person

Parcel ID# 20-145.000, 55 Turnpike Road

Mr. Picconi stated that they had applied for a zoning permit to replace their one-car garage with a two-car, two-story garage. However, upon realizing the cost, they decided to keep the existing garage for now and remove the asbestos siding to prevent asbestos from seeping into the ground water. The garage was then clad with barn boards and the doors were painted. Mr. Picconi said he will apply for another permit when they are ready to replace the current structure.

Grievance #7 – Charlotte Metcalf presented her case in person

Parcel ID# 05-975.000, 652 Pattrell Road

Ms. Metcalf has elected to withdraw 8.78 acres out of the 13.6 acres in this parcel from current use. The 8.78 acres does not have a right of way, and thus will be a landlocked parcel. Ms. Metcalf stated that the reasoning behind taking this land out of current use is a pending sale to an abutter. Ms. Metcalf stated that she feels the 8.78 acres should be assessed as excess acreage at the same rate assessed to other properties in Norwich.

Grievance #8 – John Lamppa presented his case via Zoom

Parcel ID# 11-038.000, 276 Bradley Hill Road

Mr. Lamppa stated that he is grieving the assessment on the dwelling on this parcel. This is a newly-constructed home with 3,786 sq ft of finished space. Mr. Lamppa presented 228, 398 and 451 Bradley Hill Road as comps to his assessment. Only 228 Bradley Hill Rd is another newly-constructed dwelling. The other dwellings were constructed in 1999 and 1995 respectively. Mr. Lamppa confirmed that he requested and received a zoning permit in the amount of \$780,000 for a 4-bedroom dwelling with a 3-car garage.

Grievance #9 – Mark Hammond presented his case via Zoom

Parcel ID# 10-191.000, 296 Turnpike Road

Mr. Hammond purchased this parcel on May 12, 2021 and presented a letter of agency from Greg A. Haney, Trustee of the above-referenced property. The property was listed in January 2021 for \$75,000, far below the current assessment of \$207,800. Mr. Hammond presented information from the Norwich Zoning Administrator that the property was non-conforming because it has been abandoned for over 2 years and therefore needs to be demolished, sits 7 feet into the setback from the road and a rear portion of the house is in the flood fringe of Blood Brook. Citing *Wilde v. Town of Norwich*, Mr. Hammond stated that it is his belief that this parcel should be valued at the \$30,000 he paid for it. The Listers will reach out to the Zoning Administrator for further clarification on the zoning regulations as they pertain to this parcel.

Grievance #10 – Harrison Whitecloud presented his case via Zoom

Parcel ID# 10-077.100, 00 Turnpike Road

Mr. Whitecloud purchased this parcel on September 26, 2018 for \$30,000. Mr. Whitecloud stated that the parcel had been on the market many times for well over a decade with no interest. Mr. Whitecloud stated that the parcel consists of 2.9 acres with about 2 acres being on the back side of Blood Brook. The remaining .9 acres are accessible from the road and a barn exists on the property. Mr. Whitecloud is in the process of adding a portico to the front and rear of the barn. Mr. Whitecloud is also working with an engineer to design a bridge to access the rear portion of the property where he hopes to build a dwelling at some future date. Mr. Whitecloud stated that it is his belief that this parcel should be assessed at the \$30,000 he paid for it.

Grievance #11 – James and Judy Brown presented their case via Zoom

Parcel ID# 05-151.000, 766 New Boston Road

Mr. and Mrs. Brown stated that they purchased this parcel on May 17, 2021 and presented a letter of agency from Campbell DeMallie, Jr., Executor of the Blanchard Pratt Estate. The Browns could not confirm if the property had ever been placed on the market. They stated that, working with a real estate agent and the executor, a price of \$40,000 was agreed to for the “off-market” purchase of the parcel. This price was

established by comparing the sale price of several Norwich properties. The Browns further stated in submitted documents that they intend to keep the 1 acre parcel on the east side of New Boston Road that also contains a small dwelling. It is their intent to sell the remaining 22 acres on the west side of New Boston Road to Jim Predmore whose property abuts the 22 acres for the agreed upon price of \$26,000. The Browns were undecided on whether they would tear down the existing dwelling and whether they would merge the one acre parcel with their larger parcel that abuts the one acre. Mr. Brown stated that the dwelling cannot be insured in its current condition. Mr. Brown did state that he believes the one acre parcel does qualify as a buildable lot.

Having no further grievances, the Listers closed the grievance hearings at 3:20pm.

- 4) **Next meeting(s)** – The Listers will meet on Tuesday, June 22, 2021 at 2:00 pm to deliberate the grievances presented at today’s hearings. The Contract Assessor will join via Zoom. Deliberations will be conducted privately. Grievance decisions will be announced on Wednesday, June 23, 2021 at a meeting to be warned for 9:00am. The agenda on June 23, 2021 will include grievance hearings decisions, mailing decision letters, and the lodging of the Grand List for April 1, 2021.
- 5) **Motion to Adjourn** – Motion by Smith to adjourn at 3:36pm (2nd Lindberg). Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl A. Lindberg, Chair
Board of Listers