

Norwich Board of Abatement Meeting
May 15, 2024
DRAFT MINUTES

Board of Abatement members present: Cheryl Lindberg (Chair), Pam Smith (Vice-Chair), Lily Trajman (Clerk), Dianne Amme, Marcia Calloway, Ernie Ciccotelli, Fran DeGasta, Linda Gray, Dave Krimmel, Suzanne Leiter, Alix Manny, Arline Rotman, Emily Scherer, Priscilla Vincent.

Other attendees: Dianne Neuss, Executrix for the estate of Kathleen Peterson

Called to order at 7:00pm by Lindberg.

1. Approval of minutes:

- a. 12/12/2023: Lindberg requested that the list of attendees be streamlined. Gray moved and Smith seconded approval of the minutes with the attendee portion amended as directed by Lindberg.
 - Yes – Amme, Calloway, Ciccotelli, DeGasta, Gray, Krimmel, Leiter, Lindberg, Scherer, Smith, Trajman.
 - No – none
 - Abstain – Manny, Rotman, Vincent.

2. Peterson/Neuss Abatement Request:

- a. Lindberg stated that the abatement request was for two properties on Hemlock Rd. 139 Hemlock Rd is parcel #12-006.110 and 144 Hemlock Rd. is parcel #12-012.000. Both properties are owned by the estate of Kathleen Peterson, with Dianne Neuss (her sister) as her Executrix.
 - Board members introduced themselves.
 - Applicant oath taken.
- b. Lindberg asked Neuss to give the statutory reason for abatement and present her case.
 - Neuss stated that she is requesting abatement under 24VSA §1535(a)5 – “taxes or charges upon real or personal property lost or destroyed during the tax year.”
 - Neuss stated that she and other relatives were told to vacate the Hemlock Rd. houses on 7/21 while staying there for her sister’s funeral. The road was closed between 7/22 and 11/3. Because of the road closure the family could not clean out the houses and barns, and it delayed putting the properties up for sale. The state of the road continues to impact the potential sale of the property as nobody knows what will happen with the road. Neuss stated that she calculates the portion of taxes she wishes to be abated at \$4,483.32 based on the number of days the properties were inaccessible. She is also hoping for remuneration for money spent

on hotels and winterizing the properties, which would not have been necessary if the road had remained open.

c. Lindberg asked for questions from the Board:

- Why winterize the properties if the road would be reopened before winter? Neuss stated that they had no indication the road would be reopening, so they paid extra to have someone walk all necessary supplies to the houses.
- When was the road reopened? November 3rd.
- When was access removed? July 21st.
- Were there frequent updates from the Town Manager's office? Neuss stated that she got updates at Selectboard meetings. The Town Manager would answer specific questions if he could, but nobody seemed to know what was going on or was able to provide a timeline. Neuss stated that due to the closure the family lost three months of good weather during which they could have cleaned out the houses and barns and prepared the properties for sale.
- Can a moving van access the houses now? Yes, one lane is open on the road and the fuel truck can access the houses.
- On 11/3 could a vehicle get up the road? Yes.
- Did any other buildings cause concern? No – the barns were okay. The biggest concern was lack of heat in the houses and potential for destruction or vandalism.
- How much did the road closure delay the sale of the properties? By about six months.

d. Rotman moved and Calloway seconded to close the hearing and recess until the deliberative session could be started. Passed unanimously at 7:28pm.

3. The Board entered deliberative session at 7:33pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lily Trajman

Clerk, Board of Abatement.

5/16/2023