

**Town of Cromwell
Board of Assessment Appeals
Special Meeting
Monday March 13, 2023
4:00pm Room 222**

RECEIVED FOR RECORD
Mar 16, 2023 08:36A
JoAnn Doyle
TOWN CLERK
CROMWELL, CT



A. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Julie Fitts Ritter at 4:00pm.

B. Roll Call: Board Members Chairwoman Julie Fitts Ritter, Matthew Long Jessica Downes and Alternate Jeff Serra present.

Also present: Shawna Baron, Assessor and members of the public.

C. New Business:

1. Hearings and Possible Action on Decisions

Chairwoman Fitts Ritter made a **motion** to seat Alternate Jeff Serra and appoint him as acting Chairperson in her absence this evening; Mr. Long **seconded**. Chairwoman Fitts Ritter, Mr. Long and Ms. Downes in favor; *motion passed*.

Chairwoman Fitts Ritter left the meeting at 6:00.

2 River Park

Victoria Putnam requested a reduction due to an overvalued, older pool and the inability to use part of her yard because it is a town drainage ditch. Ms. Baron explained the pool value on her card and discussed land in terms of privacy and the ability to build.

Acting Chairman Serra **motioned** to deny the appeal; Ms. Downes **seconded**. Mr. Long, Ms. Downes and Acting Chairman Serra in favor; *motion passed*.

81 Nooks Hill Road

Rosaria Hull, Robert Hull and Victoria Putnam explained in detail how over the years the water in the yard has become very bad and continues to get worse, degrading the property. Photos were also provided and they described the surrounding unsightly properties.

Ms. Baron explained that the land was already reduced to Open Space and she discussed PA 490. There was a discussion of the wetness of the base lot.

Mr. Long **motioned** to reduce the assessment to 195,000; Acting Chairman Serra **seconded**. Mr. Long, Ms. Downes and Acting Chairman Serra in favor; *motion passed*.

9 River Park

Donald Bighnatti provided the Board a map and some photos. He compared his neighbors yards to his and told the Board that sometimes, when it rains really hard, he gets water in his basement through a window. There was a discussion about flat, level yards and he believes that his is not flat nor level and his property has significant issues.

Mr. Bighnatti said that he didn't have a finished basement and did not have photos to show any water damage other than a rusty window photo. He disagreed that his property was "level" as indicated on the card; Ms. Baron said this was just a description and had no effect on value. Mr. Long asked Ms. Baron if a different descriptor could be used instead of "level".

Mr. Long **motioned** to deny the appeal; Acting Chairman Serra **seconded**. Mr. Long, Ms. Downes and Acting Chairman in favor; *motion passed*.

3 Centerwood

Mithu Sadarangani provided the Board with neighborhood assessments. He says he is the oldest and smallest house on the street and doesn't have the funds to repair and update the home. Over the years, the Board and Assessor have suggested they apply for Open Space. Tonight, Mr. Sadarangani presented an application for Open Space; if completed properly, the application will take effect with the 2023 Grand List.

Mr. Long **motioned** to deny the appeal; Ms. Downes **seconded**. Mr. Long, Ms. Downes and Acting Chairman Serra in favor; *motion passed*.

4 River Park

March and Lorraine Young gave the Board information to review and spoke to those handouts. They requested a lower value based on water damage, their drive through a depressed industrial area to get to their neighborhood and their neighboring yards are unsightly; photos were provided. There was a discussion of their neighbors doing improvements yet they have done no improvements except to repair the roof. Water has made its way into the house and they think they need new windows and to replace a lot of drywall; they haven't repaired the water problem since the last time they appealed. They questioned the 5,900 appearing on their card noting that their neighbors all had different numbers; Ms. Baron explained that it was excess land.

The Board reviewed the presentation and considered the water damage and cost to repair.

Acting Chairman Serra **motioned** to reduce the value to \$1,125,000 (787,500 assessment) due to water damage; Ms. Downes **seconded**. Mr. Long, Ms. Downes and Acting Chairman in favor; *motion passed*.

2 Sovereign Ridge

Robyn and KerriAnne Fortier and Andrew Cordes gave the Board some information. They've done no remodeling and said their house was unique in that it's basically 2 houses put together, not one whole house. They mentioned that the home was awarded a reduced value through a court case from a previous owner. Ms. Baron advised that this was done in 2012; revaluations do not take old values into consideration. The Board asked why they believed the home wasn't worth what the town valued it at. Ms. Baron explained why revaluations are done by mass appraisal; the appellants disagreed that the burden to provide a private appraisal should be on them. They said the house has had no updates, is the same as last revaluation and has leaky windows. They requested a walkthrough and would contact the Assessor's Office in the morning to schedule.

NO ACTION.

29 Court Street

DID NOT APPEAR.

4 Crest Drive

Anthony and Violet Sakoulas presented the Board with photos and said their house was outdated compared to their neighbors who are always doing renovations yet their house was still the highest valued. They did not present any market sales data; the Board hoped they could provide this. Ms. Baron explained why market data was important to present when requesting a reduction in value. The appellants expressed anger that the home across the street is being used as an AirBNB and that a commercial business doesn't belong in their neighborhood; the police have been called as a result of the type of renters that frequent the home. Despite calls to Zoning, the activity still goes on. They said they didn't move to Crest Drive to live next door to a hotel.

The Board discussed the lack of sales values presented.

Mr. Long **motioned** to reduce the value to \$380,000 (266,000 assessment); Acting Chairman Serra **seconded**. Mr. Long, Ms. Downes and Acting Chairman Serra in favor; *motion passed*.

183 Woodland Drive and 184 Woodland Drive

Ali and Shamin Sheik said that these 2 properties were exactly the same and appealed them together and that no money was put into improving either of them. The other units with higher values had been updated. They believe the assessment for each should be 70,000. Ms. Baron pointed out that they paid \$115,000 for 184 Woodland Dr September 2021 and that the market was increasing up to October 1, 2022. Mr. Ali said that they needed to bid more for the unit because they wanted it for their son to keep the family in the same place.

The Board discussed the sales market.

Ms. Downes **motioned** to reduce 183 Woodland Drive to \$118,500 (82,950 assessment) and to deny the request for 184 Woodland Drive; Acting Chairman Serra **seconded**. Mr. Long, Ms. Downes and Acting Chairman Serra in favor; *motion passed*.

7 Alexander Drive

Sharon Shuford gave the Board a packet of information and said the informal hearing resulted in a reduction but she was here to request more. She described her home and said that due to its size and features, she wasn't able to find many comparables. No one from the Assessor's Office had been in the home; Ms. Baron explained that her value is estimated and once again encouraged Ms. Shuford to let her do an inspection to determine an accurate assessment. For a variety of reasons. Ms. Shuford declined.

Ms. Downes **motioned** to deny the appeal; Acting Chair Serra **seconded**. Mr. Long, Ms. Downes and Acting Chairman Serra in favor; *motion passed*.

Angie's Concept, LLC

Angela Sanchez said that her business is Rocky Hill; she rents space there to run her hair cutting business. She said she listed Cromwell as her business location so she could get paychecks at home. She said she should not be assessed in Cromwell because her business is in Rocky Hill; she did not file a declaration in Rocky Hill. Ms. Baron explained that she needed to declare her equipment and explained why she was assessed by Cromwell.

Mr. Long **motioned** to deny the request; Ms. Downes **seconded**. Mr. Long, Ms. Downes and Acting Chairman Serra in favor; *motion passed*.

S D Associates

DID NOT APPEAR.

Sprint

DID NOT APPEAR.

Sprint

DID NOT APPEAR.

Buckeye Pipeline

DID NOT APPEAR

AT&T Mobility

DID NOT APPEAR

Sourcing Enterprises

Leila Linntoya Jarrett said that, for a variety of reasons, she never started the business that she opened in October 2021 and closed in November 2022. She provided the Board with the dissolution. She apologized and said she didn't know how it all worked, but has other businesses in Town and now understands.

Mr. Long **motioned** to reduce the value to ZERO; Acting Chairman Serra **seconded**. Mr. Long, Ms. Downes and Acting Chairman Serra in favor; *motion passed*.

D. Old Business:

Riversedge Donuts

The Board discussed the info Mr. Batista sent in.

Mr. Long made a **motion** to reduce the assessment to 101,940; Ms. Downes **seconded**. Chairwoman Fitts Ritter, Ms. Downes and Mr. Long in favor; *motion passed*.

309 Main Street

Ms. Baron reminded the Board that they cannot waive penalties and that Mr. Johnson was told that if brought in the required tax return by the end of the month that she would remove the penalty.

Mr. Long **motioned** to deny the request; Ms. Downes **seconded**. Mr. Long, Ms. Downes and Acting Chairman Serra in favor; *motion passed*.

5 Coles

Ms. Baron apprised the Board of the research she did regarding the property.

Chairwoman Fitts Ritter **motioned** to reduce the value to \$1,000,000 (700,000 assessment); Mr. Long **seconded**. Chairwoman Fitts Ritter, Ms. Downes and Mr. Long in favor; *motion passed*.

44 Primrose

Ms. Baron informed the Board that she and Mr. Carrier met and agreed on the 2020 and 2021 values to settle the court case and also agreed on values for the future. Ms. Baron recommended the Board grant a 3,317,910 assessment for 2022.

Mr. Long made a **motion** to reduce the assessment to 3,317,910; Chairwoman Fitts Ritter **seconded**. Chairwoman Fitts Ritter, Ms. Downes and Mr. Long in favor; *motion passed*.

E. Staff Comments: None.

F. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:58pm

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Ruggiero', with a stylized, flowing script.

Lisa Ruggiero