

Hampton Bays Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting

Minutes

March 21, 2019

Members Present: Irene Anthony, Al Danza, Ray D'Angelo, Thea Fry, Elizabeth Hook, Barbara Lefkowitz, Robert Lefkowitz, Gerry Loesch, Maureen Sutton

Members Absent: Doreen Bartoldus, Mary Egan, Mary Pazan, Kevin Springer

Elected Officials: none

Other Officials: Town of Southampton Sole Assessor, Ms. Lisa Goree and Town of Southampton Deputy Town Assessor, Ms. Maureen Berglin

Guests: various

- Call to Order by Chairperson Ray D'Angelo
- Pledge of Allegiance
- Mr. D'Angelo introduced Ms. Goree and Ms. Berglin
 - Mr. D'Angelo indicated that the format of the meeting would be that Ms. Goree would describe the assessment process and then there would be a period for Questions and Answers.
- Ms. Goree discussed the following as her presentation and answers to questions raised by the attendees:
 - That she has been the appointed Assessor for the past 5 years of a 6 year appointed term and is conducting outreach to various communities through the CAC and Civic Associations.
 - The Assessor's office is open all year, but property owners generally only make inquiries about property assessments during grievance time; inquiries can and should be made at other times during the year.

- o Property owners should contact the Assessor's office to verify that the property description on property record files is accurate; for example, the correct square footage, number of bedrooms, etc.
- o The property owners should also verify that they are availing themselves of all available exemptions such as STAR.
- o That there is an unpublished list of property conditions that would decrease a property value such as a busy road, unusable land, etc. The property owners should bring the existence of these conditions to the attention of the Assessor not just during the grievance period.
- o There was a Town-wide reassessment conducted by an outside consultant in 2004 and subsequently the reassessment is conducted in-house.
- o Every property must be re-inspected at least every 6 years through various methods of inspection employed by the Town including aerial and physical inspection.
- o The purpose of the reassessment is an attempt to assess like and similar properties in a uniform and equitable manner.
- o The assessment is based on the full fair market value of the property.
- o The December 2019 assessments will be based on the property condition as of March 1, 2019 "as if" valued on July 1, 2018.
- o The reassessment is based solely on recent sales of same or similar properties in a neighborhood. The sales are analyzed in detail and extrapolated to the surrounding properties.
- o If there are no or limited sales, the Assessor will look "outside of the neighborhood" for comparable sales.
- o The "grievance" process is outlined with the mailing of the tentative assessments sent out on or before May 1st. Property owners have up to the 3rd Tuesday in May to file a grievance to dispute the tentative assessment. It can be done on-line, in-person at the Assessor's office or on Grievance Day. The Board of Assessors will then determine if the property owner has provided adequate documentation to support their grievance. Once the property owner is notified of their decision, the property owner can appeal the decision by filing an appeal with the small claims court.

- o That the assessed valuation of commercial property is not based on the fair market value but on a calculation of rental income in excess of expenses called income capitalization.
 - o Properties on private dirt roads are provided with a nominal credit against their property assessment.
 - o Properties with accessory apartments are taxed only on the additional square footage of living space and not on the income producing portion.
 - o Non-conforming properties, such as the Bel-Aire Cove motel, are being taxed as the "highest and best" non-conforming use of the property not necessarily the property zoning.
 - o A vacant property, such as the Hampton Bays Diner, is assessed via income capitalization. If the taxes are not paid, Suffolk County is responsible to pay the taxes; they then could foreclose on the property.
 - o The Assessor follows rules promulgated by both New York State and rules set forth by the Town Board of the Town of Southampton. The plan for assessment prepared by the Town must be approved by NYS.
 - o The Assessor maintains an interactive website of properties and sales.
- The attendees raised concern that the methodology used by the Town, in fact, does not seem to accomplish fair and equitable property assessments. Chairperson Ray D'Angelo recommended that the CAC collectively send the Town Board a letter detailing the inequities that they have identified including, but not limited to, the following:
 - o That the housing stock in Hampton Bays is very diverse and it doesn't seem to be reasonable to apply a few sales in a neighborhood or community to the entire neighborhood or community. An "en masse" approach to reassessment does not seem equitable.
 - o That adjacent properties that are similar are often not assessed at the same value and should be considered in the reassessments
 - o Properties that include an income producing accessory apartment should be assessed "as if" a two-family house.

- o Physical inspections should be conducted including interior inspections to determine a fair and equitable comparison of properties. This would also enable to Town to obtain information on potential undisclosed accessory structures.
- Attendees raised the concern that Hampton Bays' property owners are burdened with a high tax rate as compared to the surrounding areas in the Town of Southampton . The attendees discussed that approximately 75% of the taxes paid are related to the Hampton Bays School District. The attendees discussed consolidation of school districts in the Town of Southampton either administratively or "pooling" of tax monies and resources. This discussion was tabled since it is outside the scope of the Citizens Advisory Committee.
- Attendees continued to voice concern about the State of Hampton Bays - lack of code enforcement, lack of economic development along Main Street, maintenance of public property, and other quality of life issues .
- Attendees briefly discussed the role of the Town of Southampton Trustees role and responsibilities and the proposal from the Trustees for a separate budget. The attendees indicated that they needed to obtain more information about the Trustees role and responsibilities before they could formulate a decision about a separate budget.
- Chairperson Ray D'Angelo thanked Ms. Goree and Ms. Berglin for their time.
- Meeting adjourned by Chairperson Ray D'Angelo at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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 Chairperson
 Hampton Bays CAC
 •Approved via email

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