



Town of Groton
Board of Assessors
173 Main Street
Groton, MA 01450
978-448-1127

Meeting Minutes February 16, 2005

Board Attendees:

Edward J. Kopec, Chairman
Hugh McLaughlin
Sylvia Sangiolo, Clerk

Other Attendees:

John Greenhalgh, Groton Animal Inspector
Rena E. Swezey, Assistant Assessor
Rebecca Scribner, Assessors Clerk

Mr. Kopec opened the meeting at 3:00pm.

New Business

1. The Board approved and signed the following documents:
 - Motor Vehicle Commitment - \$964,120
 - Motor Vehicle Commitment - \$10,642.55
 - MCAA Dues - \$120.00
 - CTC telephone bill - \$95.49
 - New printer, cartridge, and cable - \$239.92
 - Personal Property Record Log – Levy #6 - \$225.55
 - Personal Property Reassessment to the Riding Club at the Fairgrounds - \$1107.20 and \$276.80
2. Ms. Sangiolo initiated discussion on drawing a line for the Assessors' Office responsibility on non-day-to-day requests. Mr. McLaughlin believes that much of it should be referred over to the BOA immediately with a request in writing. All board members agreed that Ms. Swezey should not be hassled by the taxpayers.
3. Mr. John Greenhalgh, Groton Animal Inspector, attended the meeting. Mr. McLaughlin asked him how the board could determine the market value of animals.

There is no easy way and asking for the sales receipt as we are doing already should be enough.

4. Ms. Swezey said that Barbara Hopson, chair of the Farmland Advisory Commission, recommends that we ask for insurance papers to determine animal values.
5. Ms. Swezey recommends that all of the Personal Property horse abatement applications be granted. She and Mr. Greenhalgh checked all of the requests and they are valid.
6. Ms. Beatrice Lathrop wants to have an extension on the abatement application filing date. It was suggested that Ms. Lathrop be invited to a BOA meeting so that the board could explain the process including the right to go to the Appellate Tax Board (ATB). The board would also explain what the ATB would expect and what the board thinks the ATB results would be.
7. A letter should be written to Mr. Cutler to invite him to talk to the board regarding the letter he wrote to the board.
8. The Board of Health is planning on implementing new soil and water testing requirements for vacant land. Ms. Swezey is concerned that taxpayers will come in and ask for abatements when their property doesn't perc and/or are told that their land is contaminated. We could be looking at a lot of land value being lowered. According to Mr. Greenhalgh there is a natural current of arsenic from Maine to Rhode Island. Groton also has arsenic in a lot of the land because of apple orchards or other farming needs. Mr. McLaughlin and Ms. Swezey will collaborate in a letter to the BOH to let them know what the BOA's concerns are regarding this proposed policy. The letter will include a request for a meeting between the two boards before the vote on March 7th. Mr. Greenhalgh believes that the BOH is condemning the town with this policy if it passes.
9. Ms. Sangiolo asked Ms. Scribner to put Motor Vehicle information on the website now that the excise tax bills will be mailed shortly.
10. Mr. McLaughlin suggested putting a booklet together with all appropriate advice for the taxpayers and would like the Building Department to hand it out with Building Permits. Ms. Swezey said that there is a taxpayer's guide on the Manchester-by-the-Sea website that is very good.
11. The Board signed the following documents:

Exemption Applications

1. Priscilla Blood – Senior 70 and over – denied – over income requirement
2. Adolfine Pierce – Senior 70 and over – granted
3. Marie J. Bywater – Blind – granted
4. Muriel Bettencourt – Veteran – granted
5. Phil McAuley – Veteran – granted

Personal Property Abatement Applications

1. Lathrop – denied – filed late
2. Hewitt – denied – filed late
3. Horte – 321 Pepperell – granted
4. Stubbs – 79 Wyman – granted
5. Moore – 39 Pepperell – granted

6. Janis – 270 Chicopee Row – granted
7. Sullivan – 323 Main – granted
8. Haughney – 37 Old Homestead – granted
9. Yeager – 270 Chicopee Row – granted (part of Janis bill)
10. Santiano – 461 Longley – granted
11. Alocer – 42 Common – granted
12. MacDonald – 2 Farmers Row – granted
13. Frazer – 1 Yvonne – granted
14. Palmer – 228 West Main – granted
15. Clark – 399 Boston – granted
16. Billingsley – Jenkins - granted
17. Oliver's Restaurant – Boston – granted

Real Estate Abatement Applications

1. Lawrence Homestead – 44 Farmers Row – denied
2. DeMaso – Townsend – denied
3. Tomasini – 144 Crosswinds – denied
4. Vestri – 1 Yvonne – granted
5. Groton Conservation Trust – Martins Pond – granted
6. Talbot – 111 Gratuity – granted
7. Rizzitano – 216 Longley – granted
8. Blue Sage Properties – 50 Pleasant – granted
9. Smith – 78 Deerfield – granted
10. Day – 12 Highland – granted
11. Moeder - 26 Cow Pond Brook – granted
12. Lynch – 22 Cow Pond Brook – granted
13. Johnson – 60 Valley – granted

Additional Information

Ms. Swezey requested March 16-22 for vacation. The Board granted it.

The next meeting will be March 2nd at 2:00pm.

Mr. McLaughlin made a motion to adjourn at 5:20pm. Ms. Sangiolo seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous. The meeting was adjourned at 5:20pm by Mr. Kopec.