



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES September 8, 2014

PRESENT:

Janet Kidder, Chair
Peter Bianchi, Selectman
Kim Hallquist, Town Administrator
Wendy Johnson, Finance Officer

ALSO PRESENT:

Minette Sweeney, *Intertown Record*
Norm Bernaiche, Chief Assessor
Kris McAllister, Assistant Assessor
Richard Lee, Public Works Director

Chair Kidder called the meeting to order at 8:00am.

Mr. Bernaiche gave a summary of the Town's current revaluation. He said it was a mass appraisal, which is the process of evaluating a group of properties by a given date using common data. Assessing uses equations, tables and schedules based on market data. They have reviewed all the sales and properties were either inspected from inside or out. They weighed MLS data, plans, deeds, etc., and developed land and building schedules. They get good information on new construction to get a base value. There are not many land-sales, and properties on the water are often tear-downs. They rate properties based on overall design, quality and appeal. Homes built in the 70's, 80's and 90's that were rated as high-end when built are rated from 1-20. These homes have become outdated and are no longer as desirable. People are buying properties sometimes based on the land and are discounting the homes, as buyers will need to put a lot of money into the homes to update them. Other things that affect price are easements on the property, frontage, property orientation, etc.

Mr. Bernaiche said there were 193 valid sales from 4/1/12 to 6/1/14, which were arms-length transactions. This means they were sales negotiated by a buyer and a seller. They also consider sales made by persons using brokers. There are other sales beyond the 193 but are not included in their study because they are not reliable.

They have 58 condos, which is 30% of the total number of sales. They are over-represented as they do not represent 30% of the parcels or value. The sales are all over the place and vary greatly. Single family/non-waterfront properties are fairly level. Waterfront, depending on the type, is up 5-15% depending on the water body. If the property is marginal (.5 acre that is a steep

lot), it is a different market than something with enough water frontage and size to be developed. More significant increases will be seen for larger properties with waterfront. Commercial properties on Main Street will be finalized this week. The assessors receive very little information on the commercial-side; they have very few sales and receive little feedback from owners.

They expect the tax cards and letters going out to property owners in the next several days. The website will be updated with information for property owners and directions on where to call and schedule an appointment with them, as needed.

Selectman Bianchi asked what percentage of properties were they successful in going inside to view. Mr. Bernaiche was unsure of the actual figure but guessed it was between 50% and 60%. He pointed out that some homes were visited a couple of years ago which satisfies their need to review them for this revaluation. He noted that they sometimes use MLS interior pictures and sometimes they visit the property and will view it. If someone is home they will ask if they can go inside. Ms. McAllister said they were allowed into more homes in New London than in the other two towns they service.

Selectman Bianchi wondered if property owners will have access to the tax information of other property owners. Mr. Bernaiche said they would as it is all available on the website.

Selectman Bianchi said he saw Seasons, Hilltop and Highland Ridge as the main condo areas; was the 8% decrease observed in all of these or more in one than another. Mr. Bernaiche said it was the average for all the condos. He said many condos sell when children of owners who have passed away no longer want to pay to keep them. They are usually out-of-state residents who want to get rid of the expense. They are willing to sell for a lower price to rid themselves of the property.

Sunapee was reassessed in 2010 and Newbury was 2011. They will reassess Sunapee in 2015 and Newbury in 2016.

Selectman Bianchi wondered how long the appeal process would last. Mr. Bernaiche said they will probably have it go on for two weeks on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. They will hear the people and it will take as long as it takes. They will work with the property owners. The Grand List will be determined within the next several weeks.

Other Business

Richard Lee: Siding Quotes for the Academy Building

Mr. Lee said the company subcontracted to put new siding at the Baptist Church is looking at the Academy Building to provide an estimate for the Town. They will get two prices; one to scrape, patch and paint, and one for new siding.

Water Meters/Flows

Ms. Hallquist said she asked Mr. Lee to come in to discuss the sewer flows as it related to comments made at the last joint meeting of the Sunapee Sewer Commissioners and New London

Selectmen. Sunapee believes the inaccurate meter readings are the result of silt in the New London town line meter, which causes negative readings in the plant meter.

Mr. Lee said they track the flows from New London by a reading from a meter at the town line and at the plant. They receive a fax with this information every night at midnight. The plant isn't currently hooked up for this automatic fax and it is being done manually. These two numbers are subtracted, which shows the contribution from Sunapee. They calibrated the meters recently and a report is sent that explains how it had to be adjusted. He said sometimes there is a negative contribution for Sunapee. In 2013 there were 11 days that this was the case with the reading on the meter. Mr. Lee said it has been noted that sometimes silt or sediment builds up, showing that the flows are deeper than they actually are. Although this seems to make sense, the days the Sunapee meter was negative, their flows for New London stay the same. He said they are watching the numbers every day and didn't see this being an issue with their meter. Mr. Lee said he looks at the last two years' flows and it looks like Sunapee has taken an average of 12,000,000 (55%) gallons off of their flows. He wasn't sure how that can happen. New London's flows have remained consistent across the board.

Chair Kidder asked if the old meter in Sunapee was off. Mr. Lee said it is possible. When looking at the trend across the five year span, this is how it looks. New London's remains consistent but Sunapee's has dropped off. Ms. Hallquist said that at the last joint sewer meeting, Sunapee had no theory as to why their flows would drop so drastically.

Chair Kidder said at the next meeting they should have their engineer come with them to represent the Town in this regard. She didn't think they should be paying 75% of the flows if the meter readings were not accurate. She wasn't comfortable with the fact that the flows don't seem to add up.

There was discussion as to how manholes can be analyzed to identify where rainwater may be entering the sewers causing spikes in New London's contribution to the flows.

IT WAS MOVED (Peter Bianchi) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to adjourn the meeting. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 8:59 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London