

**Minutes of Board of Civil Authority Meeting  
July 17, 2013**

Board Present: Jared Cadwell, Robert Vasseur, Ed Read, Tom Bisbee, Ann Day, Rick Rayfield,  
Lisa Koitzsch

Listers Present: Gussie Graves, Fred Spencer, Tony Egan

Appellants: Raemon and Linda Weston – Parcel ID#: 03-086-051.1

Meeting called to order 5:40 p.m.

Jared stated that this was a continuation of proceedings on the Westons' request for property tax adjustment and that this was an opportunity to hear any further comments from the Westons or the Listers and to address any questions Board of Civil Authority (BCA) members might have.

Jared acknowledged the Report of the Inspection Committee from July 12, 2013 and moved to enter this document into public record. Ed seconded the motion. After no additional comments from the inspection committee, the motion was approved.

Mr. Weston stated that the only additional item he wanted to point out was that the price for the 2 acre house site seems excessively high, especially given the power line that runs right across the entire site. Gussie said the power line was taken into consideration when evaluating this property and it was the reason the 2 acre house site was listed as 10% under grade.

Lisa asked the listers how the unit cost for siding was determined. Gussie said that all wood siding was given the same unit cost but that this number was affected by the overall quality grade of the house. In this case, the Weston's property was given a grade of 4.5 to reflect the low quality siding. A 3.0 grade is average whereas all post and beams get a minimum of a 5.0 grade. Mr. Weston asked the Board to tell him what the definition of average siding was, and what in their estimation was the best siding. He noted that the siding on his home was made of pressed OSB board and that it was stained on one side. Fred said that the low grade siding on the Weston house was offset by the quality of the interior. Lisa noted that the overall grade for the property should be reduced even more to reflect the poor quality siding.

Rick noted that the computer program that produces the valuation of properties is a hybrid assessment between what a property is valued at and what it costs to rebuild it. This means that it is sometimes hard to tease out individual details since the overall grade affects many of the individual line items on the assessment. Mr. Weston asked if the computer program used by Fayston was a state computer program. Gussie said that it was approved for use by the State and that 70% of towns in Vermont use the same program.

Jared asked the listers to speak to three points of interest from the inspection committee's visit: quality of the decking; lack of landscaping and the incomplete exterior of the house; and the quality of the hearth.

Gussie noted that there was stone masonry on the floor for the hearth, some stone up the stairway, and a vent to the outside. Rick asked her if \$4500 was a standard amount for every hearth. Tony answered that that is the Town's standard hearth valuation and then that amount is controlled by the quality. Ray noted that the Town of Warren does not charge a separate line item amount for hearths.

Gussie stated that the \$4,500 value for the Weston's hearth was indeed too high and that a value of \$3,500 would be more appropriate.

At this point, Mr. Weston reminded the Board that he had received an appraisal from Union Bank for his property that was completed last week and that the bank value was \$265,000. He noted that the Town assessed value was much higher. Ed commented that bank appraisals were typically lower than town appraisals and were usually based on what they were willing to lend on and Mr. Weston vehemently disagreed.

In relation to the incomplete landscaping and house exterior, Gussie stated that this line item amount could be reduced from \$5,000 to \$2,500.

Mr. Weston addressed the quality of the decking material used on the exterior porches of his house. He said that pressure treated lumber was a cheap material and should not be given a high rating. Fred noted that, years ago, people would use spruce for decking and that PT lumber was much better. He stated that PT is not cheap and does last a long time.

Ed asked the listers in what increments the overall grade for the property was determined and Gussie responded by explaining that the overall grade could be adjusted by quarter increments.

Jared raised another concern that the Weston's had about their property: state and town restrictions for at least four acres. Gussie noted that the 4 acres of wetlands were rated at 60% and that for some people, wetlands hold value as visual protection, aesthetic quality, etc. Mrs. Weston stated that their hands were tied as they couldn't do anything with any of their acreage that was designated as a wetland.

Mrs. Weston asked the listers why the unit cost for a porch with no roof was as high as a porch with the roof. The listers explained that smaller porches cost more to build. The Westons declared that this did not make sense to them.

Rick raised the issue of the percentage of radiant heat in the home. Currently, the Westons are listed as having 100% radiant heat. Mr. Weston reminded the Board that he only has radiant heating pipe in 65% of his home. Ed stated that even though the pipes did not cover the entire house, the entire house was still heated by radiant heat. Jared asked for more clarity from the listers on this issue and Gussie stated that she could adjust this number to take into account the unheated area (loft).

Rick made a motion to close the hearing and enter into deliberative session. Ann seconded the motion. All approved and the hearing was closed at 6:24 p.m.

At 6:45 p.m. Jared moved to open a deliberative session to discuss the Westons' appeal. Lisa seconded the motion and all approved.

After some discussion, Rick moved to ask the listers to modify the property listing to amend the value of the hearth from \$4,500 to \$3,500 and to reduce the value of landscaping from \$5,000 to \$2,500. Ann seconded the motion. All approved the motion and it was passed.

As a result of more discussion, Jared moved that the listers should revisit and take into consideration the poor quality of the exterior siding for the 2014 tax year. Ann seconded the motion. All approved and the motion was carried.

Ann made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Jared seconded the motion. The meeting ended at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:  
Lisa Osborn Koitzsch  
Justice of the Peace

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_