



**Ad-Hoc Reassessment Committee Meeting - Thursday, August 25  
@ 2:00PM in Bushor Conference Room (City Hall, 1st Floor) and  
\*\*REMOTE\*\*  
8/25/2022**

**AD-HOC REAPPRAISAL COMMITTEE**

**Thursday, August 25, 2022**

**Bushor Conference Room and via Zoom**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Members Present:** David Edwards (Interim Chair), Joan Shannon, Christopher Haessly, Kevin Stapleton, Daniel Kirk, Jonathan Chapple-Sokol, Alan Bjerke

**Staff Present:** John Vickery (City Assessor), Joseph Dempsey (City Attorney's Office Staff)

**Others in Attendance:** Members of the Public: Sarah Carpenter, Jeff Comstock, Nancy Comstock, Leighton (Sam) Johnson, Tia Decker

Meeting called to order at 2:00 PM.

**1.0 Agenda**

**1.01 Motion to Adopt/Amend Agenda**

*Motion to Adopt Agenda as is.*

Motion by David Edwards, Seconded by Joan Shannon

Final Resolution: Motion Passes

Yes: Unanimous.

**2.0 Adopt Minutes from 07/21/2022**

**2.01 Motion to Adopt Minutes from 07/21/2022**

*Motion to Adopt Minutes from 07/21/2022 without changes.*

Motion by Kevin Stapleton, Seconded by Joan Shannon

Final Resolution: Motion Passes

Yes: Unanimous.

**3.0 Public Comment**

David Edwards: We have three members of the public here in person and two online.

Joan Shannon: Some people are having difficulty with the BoardDocs Zoom link.



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David Edwards: I heard that too. We have another public comment meeting to hear from everyone. Let's begin with the public comment.

Jeff Comstock: Hello. We live at 48 Plattsburgh Ave. We went through the appeal process for reappraisal and feel it worked well. We have some major themes to discuss. First, there is a large disconnect between city databases and the reappraisal process. We looked at city land records, permitting records, and Zillow and the City records do not reflect the market. We learned about the legal standard for the reappraisal process as opposed to comparing by neighborhood for laypeople. This defies common sense. Lay knowledge does not equate to reappraisal and was confusing for a layperson.

The appraisal process was entirely market based from my perspective. Market forces seemed to have a larger impact on appraisal than the "fundamental value." I compared this to the stock market where stocks have a steady value based on a fundamental value of the stock.

We own a house that we have improved upon while others have not in our neighborhood. The value of our building is greater than the neighbors, but is not reflected in the appraisal.

Are there factors that come into play regarding neighborhood? I live on Plattsburgh Ave and it is a transport street. Is there compensation for being on such a street instead of somewhere quiet? Last point, I suggest increasing the frequency of the reappraisal process. I would prefer that City staff do the appraisal and not have an emergency process with Tyler. Tyler was not familiar with the City and hopefully staff could perform appraisals more often and hopefully not be affected by politics.

Adding some kind of fundamental value might give everyone a stronger idea of where their properties are at in terms of value.

Nancy Comstock: Ward 7. Continuing on what Jeff said: we looked at lots of City database information. City permitting did not align with the tax appraisals. Seems like permitting people and tax people are not communicating. Zillow has even a different number of baths/beds. Permitting updates could bring in more money to the City.

Taxes went down in the downtown because profits went down. Could businesses lower profits during appraisal years?

Leighton (Sam) Johnson: Forty-six year Burlington resident, retired real estate appraiser. People asked for my help during the appraisal. I think Burlington is one of the worst cities for data. It is a mess. There is no consistency within the City. Square footage is always hard to verify. I don't know how MLS uses its information.

In collecting this data, Tyler did a bad job in its duties. In 2005, Tyler also did a bad job, lowering the quality of the data. Saunders was asked to bid on the reappraisal, full disclosure. The process is not transparent, the City sites and records databases are not good and are very muddy. The closed process means not every sale is recorded, even though Zillow or the like can provide some insight. I think there is a lot to do to improve the process.

Sarah Carpenter: I am mostly here to listen. We need to do reappraisals more often and we can look at other cities our size. Rolling appraisals might be an option. Our communication was very poor. Portland, Oregon did some good work in communicating about the process. We need to support our citizens in how they get data. We could create an ombudsman to help guide people in how to value their property. We could identify which impediments in state law are causing the largest problems and we can track those. If there is any legislative ability to change them then we should do



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that.

Tia Decker: No comment at this time.

David Edwards: I guess that's everyone. We will close the public comment section of this meeting.

#### **4.0 Any Other Committee Business**

David Edwards: Any other business?

Joan Shannon: When I posted this on Front Port Forum I received a lot of inquiries for where to send comments. People can't make meetings and might want to send written comments.

John Vickery: There is a webpage. We could add a section to add a place to send comments.

Joseph Dempsey: People can email me and I can try to create a comments page on the website.

Joan Shannon: So we can forward emails to Joe and then he can put them on Boarddocs. I had a question for John. We have done rolling appraisals and people felt they were unfairly targeted. People think more frequent appraisals will be less hard, but people never like getting appraised. Can you review with us how a reappraisal is triggered? They can be triggered by different parameters. A big concern is commercial properties and how the income process will be corrected for Covid business times.

John Vickery: If there is a sale and it is higher than appraisal then we don't trigger an appraisal. New information such as a finished basement would change the value, but that's it. The state allows for rolling appraisals, and we have in the past. We appraised apartment buildings in 2015 since they were not equitable with the city on a whole. We appraised an entire class of buildings. We can adjust to close the percentage difference so they are on par with other building classes.

We did a lot of valuation changes of commercial properties in the last year. We noted from forms which commercial properties had lowered cashflow during 2020. We did not appraise all commercial class buildings, but only the ones that indicated they had cashflow disruption.

Joan Shannon: So commercial building appraisal with cashflow problems were lowered for that year?

John Vickery: We reexamined the commercial properties that noted cashflow disruptions.

Joan Shannon: Hotels?

John Vickery: Yes, we did hotels.

Alan Bjerke: I know certain properties, such as properties with views of the lake, are readjusted in batches.

John Vickery: Yes, we also did that with some condo buildings when the appraisals were not aligned with the city on a whole.

Alan Bjerke: The state shares the cost of appraisal? They gave us a \$100,000 a year, correct?



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John Vickery: The \$100,000 is not meant to cover the whole cost, but is supposed to cover some. There is a push to raise the amount. It is based on parcel count. A city-wide appraisal costs approximately a million dollars.

David Edwards: Anyone else? I had a thought. We had a resignation: Karen is no longer a member. Are we obligated to fill that category?

Joan Shannon: Karen Paul should be notified on the vacancy.

David Edwards: Anything else?

## **5.0 Adjournment**

### **5.01 Motion to Adjourn**

*Motion to adjourn.*

Motion by Joan Shannon. Seconded by Kevin Stapleton

Final Resolution: Motion Passes

Yes: Unanimous.

**Meeting adjourned at 2:50PM.**