



**Town of Norwell
Board of Assessors
345 Main St., Norwell, MA 02061**

Open Session Minutes

Date: November 16, 2020
Time: 6:00 PM (Executive Session), 6:45 PM (Open Session)
Location: Zoom (Remote) Meeting, pursuant to the Governor's Executive Order (dated March 12, 2020, temporarily modifying certain provisions of Open Meeting Law, G. L. c. 30A § 20(d) and 940 CMR 29.10(4)(b).)
Meeting ID: Held via Zoom: Meeting ID 795-7760-6957, password 6fQP2Q

Board Members Present: Rob Allen, Joan Osborne, Mary Horowitz

Staff Present: Pam Davis

Mr. Allen called the Open Session to order at 6:00pm.

Of note: Because this meeting was held in a fully remote manner, all votes were done by roll call.

Ms. Horowitz moved to open the meeting at 6:00pm, and Ms. Osborne seconded. Mr. Allen, Ms. Osborne, and Ms. Horowitz voted in favor of the motion.

Mr. Allen welcomed everyone to the Open Session. He stated that the purpose of the meeting was to directly speak with taxpayers affected by improper assessments of affordable housing units in town. He noted that the Town has now gone through all 40B units to ensure they will be assessed accurately for FY'21 and moving forward, and explained the two methods used to assess 40B units (based on deed riders).

Regarding underassessed properties, we have fixed the error and will not/can not collect underassessed taxes.

Regarding overassessed properties, we have fixed the error, and we are pursuing available remedies with the state/DOR to attempt to recover overpayments for taxpayers from the last three years.

Ms. Osborne clarified that Ms. Davis found these errors, and re-calculated accurate assessments, and that a Board member reviewed her calculations, which were then validated by DLS.

Mr. Allen apologized to all affected taxpayers on behalf of the Board.

Alison MacDonald, of 9 Hillcrest Circle, addressed the Board. Ms. MacDonald questioned why resale pricing is being used to determine assessments, and noted that the developer disagrees with this methodology. Mr. Allen addressed this issue, noting that DLS has agreed with the assessments and the consistent use of resale value.

Ms. MacDonald shared her story and financial circumstances, and is very frustrated with this process and the staff within the Assessor's office (historically and currently). Mr. Allen stated that we are prioritizing changing the level of transparency within the office, and the office's perception in the community—we are committed to being open and honest with taxpayers.

Ms. Davis noted that Ms. MacDonald's bill is decreasing for FY'21, and there was discussion of how to get the bill to her escrow company so that they could begin adjusting her escrow payment downward.

Ms. Osborne stated on behalf of the Board that we believe these properties warrant a specific review annually to ensure assessments are accurate going forward, and we have scheduled these reviews annually.

With no other community members indicating they had business with the Board, Ms. Horowitz moved to adjourn the Open Session at 7:24pm. Ms. Osborne seconded the motion. Mr. Allen, Ms. Osborne, and Ms. Horowitz voted in favor of the motion.

All documents and exhibits referenced above are retained in the Assessor's Office or with Human Resources, in accordance with the Commonwealth's public records retention schedules.

Submitted by: Mary Horowitz, Clerk