

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof a regular meeting of the Board of Appeal and Equalization in and for the City of Albany, Stearns County, Minnesota, was called to order by Mayor Daron Gersch at 5:40 o'clock in the evening on Wednesday, April 18, 2018, in the Council Room at 400 Railroad Avenue for the said City.

Other members present were: John R. Harlander, and Keith Heitzman. Councilor Tom Kasner arrived at 5:45 PM and Councilor Al Amdahl at 5:50 PM.

Jeff Johnson, Director, Stearns County Assessor's Office, and Deb Haus, Stearns County Appraiser, were present for the meeting to provide information to the Board for those property owners objecting to their 2018 assessment for property taxes payable in 2019.

Diane Wolf, 230 3rd Street, (40.25527.0000), appeared before the Board requesting that the 2018 estimated market value of \$131,200 be lowered to similar properties with square footage and lot sizes in her neighborhood. Ms. Wolf noted that there are homes in her neighborhood that have larger lots and garages with less market value. Ms. Haus noted that the land value is \$19,700 and building value \$111,500 or a total of \$131,200. Ms. Haus also provided the Board the total square foot and price per square foot of several homes in the neighborhood. After due discussion, a motion was made by Mayor Daron Gersch and seconded by John R. Harlander to reduce the 2018 estimated market value from \$131,200 to \$123,500, a reduction of \$7,700 to the building value. All voted for the motion and it carried.

Rod Gerads, 117 Schwinghammer Drive, (40.25655.0057) appeared before the Board requesting that the 2018 estimated market value of \$37,500, not including \$2,500 for lot improvements, be lowered to what the foreclosed vacant lots are selling for in the Whispering Oaks at Two River subdivision which is \$25,000. Mr. Gerads informed the Board he purchased the lot in April 2017 for \$18,500 from Mark Rodenwald who had the lot for sale for many years. Mr. Harlander noted that any foreclosed vacant lot in this subdivision should have a market value for what the lot was purchased for from Stearns County which includes special assessments. Ms. Haus questioned if Mr. Rodenwald was a motivated seller. Mr. Gerads noted that there is a similar lot in the same subdivision that has a market value of \$26,800 and questioned why his lot would have a higher value. After due discussion, a motion was made by John R. Harlander and seconded by Tom Kasner to reduce the 2018 estimated market value of the land from \$37,500 to \$28,800. All voted for the motion and it carried. Mr. Johnson noted that the total 2018 estimated market value for the land will be \$28,800 and \$2,500 lot improvements or a total of \$31,300.

William Scepaniak, Jr., 500 1st Street (40.25009.0010) informed the Board that his estimated market value on his property increased seventeen (17%) percent over the last two years; whereby no improvements have been done to the property. Mr. Scepaniak questioned if other properties in the City received the same percent increase because there are very few sales in Albany over \$300,000. Mr. Johnson informed the Board that the 2018 estimated market value is \$440,200 compared to \$396,700 in 2017. Mr. Johnson noted that there were increases as high as twenty (20%) percent in the County. No action was taken by the Council.

Donovan Stoneouse, 804 Macalester Court, (40.25640.0064), appeared before the Board requesting that the 2018 estimated market value of \$32,500 for his lot be reduced to \$14,000 what he paid for the vacant lot. Mr. Stoneouse noted that a local contractor constructed a small patio home on the lot. Ms. Haus noted the total 2018 estimated market value if \$143,500 and the patio home is 1,012 square feet. Mr. Harlander noted that the seller originally purchased the lot from a local bank for \$7,000+/- and the seller actually doubled his money which should be considered a qualified sale; whereas the assessor's lot value is too high. After due discussion, a motion was made by John R. Harlander and seconded by Tom Kasner to reduce the 2018 estimated market value for the land from \$32,500 to \$20,000 or the total building and land estimated market value reduced from \$143,500 to \$131,000. All voted for the motion and it carried.

Councilor John R. Harlander stepped down from the Board.

Mr. Harlander appeared before the Board on behalf of his son Adam Harlander (40.25655.0038), 108 Whispering Oaks Lane, to inform the Board that the 2018 estimated market value of the lot at \$35,000 is too high when similar lots owned by the State of Minnesota in this subdivision were sold at a public auction for \$25,000. Ms. Haus noted that the Board reduced the value of the lot last year from \$41,000 to \$35,000. Mr. Harlander informed the Board that the sale of these lots was not distressed and were a qualified sale and objected to the proposed value of \$35,000. After due discussion, a motion was made by Mayor Daron Gersch and seconded by Al Amdahl to reduce the estimated value of the land from \$35,000 to \$30,000. All voted for the motion and it carried.

Mr. Harlander also appeared before the Board to question why his property at 740 1st Street would have seen a 14.6% increase from last year when no improvements were made to the residence. Mr. Harlander noted that there are no municipal utilities and the structure needs exterior maintenance. Mr. Harlander questioned why properties in Albany with higher values than the majority of homes would have seen large percent increases knowing there are such few sales. Ms. Haus noted that properties in Albany are also reviewed with others in Stearns County. Mr. Harlander informed the Board that he is not appealing the value of his house.

Mr. Harlander rejoined the Board.

After due discussion, a motion was made by Tom Kasner and seconded by Al Amdahl to adjourn the meeting at 6:55PM.

Tom Schneider
Clerk/Adm.