

# Carlisle Board of Assessors

## Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting date: Thursday, February 10, 2022

Town Hall, Nickles Conference Room

66 Westford St.

Carlisle, MA 01741

BOA members in attendance:

- Ken Mostello, Chair
- Teresa Kvietkaukas
- David Boardman, arriving at 8:30am

Others attending: Principal Assessor, Brian MacDonald

Motioned for approval: Ms. Kvietkaukas

Second: Mr. Mostello

Roll call vote: 2 yays, 0 nays

Approval date: 02/18/22

Chair Mostello called the meeting to order at 8:15 am.

Mr. Mostello motioned for approval on meeting minutes for 01/28/22—all of which had been distributed to the BOA members prior to the meeting for review. The motion was seconded by Ms. Kvietkaukas. The roll call was 2 in favor, none opposed, with Mr. Boardman arriving after the vote.

Mr. MacDonald began by stating that the town had only received 8 abatement applications to date. He added that he was really pleased with the work performed by Mr. Georges Paradissis under the senior work program. Ms. Kvietkaukas noted that he didn't much time left under the program. Mr. Mostello stated the senior work program had been a win for everyone, and he would love to see it expanded. He also said we might want to consider offering Georges part-time employment until the new assistant was hired and offered to ask Mr. Goddard if we could do that. Mr. MacDonald noted that we had significantly underspent our budget, so there should be no issue in doing so.

Mr. MacDonald continued by stating that this was the good news, but he also had some disturbing news. He stated that he had done some analysis on the open building permits left by his predecessor. Currently, there are 1,771 open permits of which 530 are greater than

\$50,000, 144 are greater than \$500,000 and 22 exceed \$1,000,000. Many of them pre-date 2021 and it was not clear yet how many of these may be clerical issues and how many represent unassessed improvements. Mr. MacDonald mentioned that many improvements like a roof replacement have no impact on assessment and should have just been closed out.

Mr. Mostello stated that he was looking for an analysis of the open permits, mentioning that permits more than \$500,000 weren't likely roof replacements. Mr. MacDonald mentioned that would take time. Mr. Mostello said, in that case, he should start with a statistical sampling of what is open and identify the circumstances on each. In particular, he said that the town has likely missed new growth opportunities and needed to recover those. Mr. MacDonald promised to have an analysis completed by the next board meeting, which was subsequently scheduled for Friday, February 18 at 8 am. Mr. Boardman noted he would not be in attendance.

Mr. MacDonald went on to mention that he conducted an audit of the cyclical inspections that had been done and found nearly half are out of DOR compliance—specifically 791 out of 1,798 total assessments.

In responding to Mr. MacDonald, Mr. Mostello stated that the numbers were sobering, but he wasn't totally surprised. He said he suspected we were well behind due to Ms. Stamp's protracted illness, the shortfall in new growth, and comments that were made by her assistant prior to her departure. He went on to add that 1/3 of 2021 new growth was in condos which seemed uncharacteristic for Carlisle. He reiterated that the BOA was committed to transforming the management of the department and that was the mission we needed to undertake.

Mr. Mostello added that the board needed a plan to get this cleaned up and the department needed to get the resources to execute the plan. Mr. Mostello stated he had discussed hiring an assistant assessor instead of a lower-level admin resource with both the board's FinCom and Select Board liaisons and they were supportive of the idea. Mr. MacDonald asked if a better paid position had been budgeted. Mr. Mostello responded that it wasn't because the FinCom didn't want to get into hypothetical requirements. He added that they also were supportive and that the process of getting approval would be far easier if we could cost justify this hire by savings on Patriot fees and finding new new growth. He reiterated that the board needed Mr. MacDonald to focus on putting the analysis together.

Mr. MacDonald also reported that the property grading system used by Ms. Stamp was inflated in Carlisle. He said that he has seen this in other communities, but it was of particular concern in Carlisle. Most properties were classified as "A's". Mr. Mostello asked if the grading standard was a community level one or a statewide one. Mr. MacDonald said it should be a community standard. He went on to say that typically high grading was used to offset underassessed construction costs. He stated that assessed construction costs are in the range of about \$100 but market costs are closer to \$300. He said that correcting it could be disruptive to assessments and might need to be a multi-year process. Mr. Mostello asked who would win and who would lose if we did this. Mr. MacDonald said he wouldn't know until he probed it further.

The conversation shifted to the topic of the GIS maps. Mr. MacDonald discussed the matter with the town's building inspector, Jon Metivier. He confirmed that we have the licensed software but needed the appropriate "map layers" from the town's map contractor in Maine. He said we could get this cleaned up but would need to wait until new hardware was in place. Various board members stated that the top priority was to work toward getting the assistant assessor hired. Mr. MacDonald agreed. He stated that he wanted someone who knew appraisal. He said he could teach the clerical side of the job but teaching appraisal would be hard to do. The board members nodded in agreement.

Ms. Kvietkaukas stated that she would not be running for reelection in the Spring due to added family responsibilities. Mr. Mostello mentioned that he was sorry she wouldn't be back and thanked her for her service, especially after the loss of Ms. Stamp. She said she'd be happy to fill in occasionally. All board members said they would look for candidates to fill her position.

Mr. MacDonald asked when the next board meeting would be held. Mr. Mostello inquired as to when he would be ready with his analysis on the cost justification for the assistant position. He responded next week. A date of Friday, February 18<sup>th</sup> at 8 am was set for the next BOA meeting.

Chair Mostello introduced a motion to adjourn at 10:00am. The motion was seconded by Ms. Kvietkaukas and carried 3-0.