



Board of Civil Authority

Monday, August 21, 2023 @ 6:00 p.m.

Library Community Meeting Room (39 Bombardier Road)

MINUTES

BCA Members Present: Charles Barsalow, JP; Kristin Beers, Clerk; Marty Branch, JP; Kevin Endres, JP; Denise Hughes, JP; Jon Hughes, Chair; Tom Hughes, JP; Christopher Mattos, JP; Wendell Noble, JP; Chuck Wilton, JP

BCA Members Not Present: Darren Adams, Selectboard Member; Steve Burke, JP; Amy Maxfield, JP; Dana Maxfield, JP; Leland Morgan, JP & Selectboard Member; Michael Morgan, JP & Selectboard Member; Brenda Steady, Vice Chair & Selectboard Member; Chris Taylor, Selectboard Member

Others Present: Edgar Clodfelter, Assessor; Murray Thompson

1. The BCA meeting was called to order by Jon Hughes at 6:06 p.m.
2. Flag Salute - Jon led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance
3. Public Forum – none
4. Approval of Minutes:
 - a) Chuck Wilton made a motion to approve the BCA minutes for the July 25, 2023 meeting, with a second by Denise Hughes. The motion passed unanimously.
5. Tax Assessment Appeal Hearing: Thompson-Smith Family Trust

Jon Hughes opened the hearing of the Thompson-Smith Family Trust, by stating the property location of 0 Middle Road and parcel ID # 204005.002000.

Jon administered the witness oath to the appellant and assessor. He then administered the BCA oath to the board members present.

Jon asked if Mr. Thompson received the Milton BCA Rules of Procedure, yes, and if he had any questions. Mr. Thompson mentioned that he may run over his five-minute time allowance. With no further questions, Jon asked the BCA to disclose any conflict of interest or ex parte communication, none.

Edgar Clodfelter explained that prior to the 2022 town wide reappraisal this property was valued at \$1,500. It was reappraised at a value of \$5,500. As a result of Grievance the value was lowered to \$900.

Mr. Thompson provided some background on how he obtained this property from his father as a parcel included with their farm on the Colchester/Milton town line. This land locked swamp, off Middle Road, was purchased by his great-grandfather and used to harvest cedar posts. The property was, and still is, only accessible by horse and sled in the winter when the swamp is frozen, via a right of way through two other properties (which may or may not still exist). The property has become inaccessible over time (no longer have a horse, no

path for a modern vehicle) and the cedars stopped growing (his father blamed this on the road salt).

Mr. Thompson explained that he has tried to sell the property, and he has tried to give it away for free. He has asked the State, the Town and adjoining neighbors. No one is interested. He requested the value of this property be adjusted to \$0.00. He described his discontent with paying taxes on a worthless property and wants to be rid of it.

Edgar Clodfelter shared a list comparable land locked swamps in Cornwall, VT that are valued at about \$200 per acre. He proposes reducing the property value even further to \$200 per acre, making a new value of \$700. From a conservationist point of view, the wetlands have an important ecological value. In response to Kevin Endres' question, in Ed's 40 years of experience, he has never seen a property valued at \$0.00.

Denise asked if Mr. Thompson hired a realtor to target the right kind of buyer. Not exactly, but Mr. Thompson described the efforts he did make. Chuck suggested he try the local Audubon Society, and asked if there are State restrictions (CORE/ANR) on wetlands. Jon asked if the comparables were stand-alone or an addition to existing property. It was suggested that Mr. Thompson considers putting it in his will as a gift it to the State.

Jon Hughes asked for inspection committee volunteers. Denise, Tom, Chuck and Jon will make arrangements directly with Mr. Thompson. (Drone use was ruled out.)

6. Other business - none

7. Recess

a) Chris Mattos made a motion to recess the hearing until September 18, with a second by Kevin Endres. The motion passed unanimously.

*Respectfully submitted,
Kristin Beers*

APPROVED MINUTES:


Jon Hughes, Chair

Date: _____

9/18/23