

Sterling Board of Assessors
Room 109, Butterick Municipal Building, 1 Park St., Sterling MA 01564
Minutes of Meeting October 28, 2015

Present: Donlin Murray (Don), Chairman

Robert Cutler (Bob), Clerk

Harald Scheid (Harald), Contract Assessor (RRG/Regional Resource Group)

Becky Boucher (Becky), Associate Regional Assessor

Debbie Dreyer (Debbie) Assistant to the Assessor

Michael Rivers (Mike) arrived @7:40am

Meeting Opened at 7:30am

Roll Call & Approval of Agenda

Robert Cutler present, Donlin Murray present - along with Harald Scheid, Becky Boucher & Debbie. Bob made a motion to accept the agenda, 2nd by Don, all in favor, aye.

Payroll, Payables, Statutory Exemption list, any abatements, warrants were signed.

NEW BUSINESS

Review & approve previous minutes – Minutes of the 9/28/15 meeting

MOTION: Bob made a motion to approve the minutes, 2nd by Don, all in favor aye.

Discuss Chapter 61B policy – There was a concern last year that stemmed from a Chapter request from a property owner who wanted to put their property into 61B; not make it available to the public, but keep it as land preservation. Question as to whether the Board has a right to request a management plan under the Land Preservation statute – some towns have adopted that policy. The 61B Policy draft was reviewed & discussed. The DOR's current feeling is that it could be within the local Board's purview to be able to have some degree of timing in making the decision & the ability to create some policy around implementation of the statute. An annual application would be required along with documentation demonstrating what makes their property unique & what measures they are taking to insure it continues as such.

MOTION: Mike made a motion to approve the Chapter 61B policy as written, 2nd by Bob, all in favor aye.

Letters from Doris Bennett – Doris Bennett lives on Upper North Row Road & has a problem with run-off from a neighbor's property – she believes much of this has to do with the construction of the home & that the septic system was approved for a 4 bedroom home, but that this home has a total of 5 bedrooms & therefore in violation of the Board of Health regulations. Our records show a 5 bedroom home. Doris would like someone from this office to inspect the home for a bedroom count. Our policy is that we undertake data verification during our cyclical inspection work, but we also recognize that in respecting property owners constitutional rights, we don't have the ability to just knock on their door & say we're going to count bedrooms. When meeting with Doris, Harald suggested she speak with her neighbor about her concerns. If there was a mutual request to verify information, we could do that, otherwise we can only act in an advisory capacity. Harald will draft a response to Doris Bennett's letter for review at our next meeting.

CONTRACT REGIONAL ASSESSOR (RRG) UPDATE

Review Chapter Returns – Becky presented the letter that will be going out to the Chapter land owners whose properties require an updated lien, requesting a \$75 recording fee to go to the Registry of Deeds. Becky presented a list of Chapter application returns. Mike reminded the Board that they need to invoke the “Rule of Necessity” before discussing the returns. Becky related some of the issues that she noticed & they were discussed. More review of the applications will be scheduled for our next meeting along with signing liens.

OLD BUSINESS

Payment for part-time fill in – The Board will check on the possibility of putting an article on the warrant for the next Town Meeting to cover this.

Future agenda items: Sign Chapter liens, review Chapter returns

Next meeting: 12/3/15 @7:30am

References: Lien letter, Doris Bennett letter, Chapter return list, draft 61B Policy

Mike moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:50am, 2nd Bob, all in favor aye.

Respectfully Submitted
Debbie Dreyer
Assistant to the Assessor