

SB meeting, 7-1-22

Good morning.

I'm here this morning in order to meet with you regarding my abatement request, which was denied in a letter dated May 24, 2022.

As your minutes of 5-19-22 state,

- Ms. Quinton feels the residents who are having their abatements discussed should be notified before the meeting. Ms. Cutting explained that this is the first step in the process of reviewing the abatements. The property owner will receive a letter stating whether the abatement has been granted or denied and then the owners have the opportunity to meet with the Board if they have any concerns.

Here are my concerns.

My house is on the east side of Rt. 10 just south of town, at 300 DCH (next to the Bailey Farm, for any of you who do not know). I bought it in 1990 from Morton and Kathy Bailey. It still has the same doors, windows, roof, kitchen, linoleum floors, and single bathroom. Todd Haywood made his first visit to my home after I filed for an abatement. He was there for about 15 minutes, in order to do what he called "a complete inspection of the property." He did not look at the neighborhood.

My neighborhood includes the farm, where, as I'm sure that you have observed, there is lots of abandoned equipment in the side yard and barnyard. Some in town consider it to be an eyesore. You may not be aware that there is also a sizable junkyard just to the east of my property, on Bailey land, which is fully visible when the leaves are gone. This was not there when I bought my house, but now there are tall heaps of old household good, vehicles, and farm equipment. I have photos of how it once was, and it's very different from today.

Between 150 DCH, which is about a mile and a half south of Grant Brook, and my house, there are 19 properties, 16 of which are residences. These houses are small to medium-sized places of modest appearance, most of which are gracefully aging; my house was 41 years old in 2021. Collectively, taxes on these homes increased 10% in 2021. Mine, which has not had upgrades of any sort for about a dozen years prior to 2022, increased by 20.3%

Just to the north of me is large property of woodland and meadow, with a multi-million dollar home and other structures. Their elegant and perfectly maintained home is less than 20 years old. Their property tax went down 10.2% in 2021.

Now for comparison. I understand that this is the way such appeals are supposed to be done, but without being a real estate professional, any such comparison is a long shot. There is a property nearby

at 48 Shoestrap Road. This house is roughly comparable to mine in style, age, and size, though it also has several outbuildings and 2 bathrooms to my one. Their tax increased by 2%. So the algorithm that caused my assessment to increase by 20% appears to not have applied to their similar property.

The assessor wrote that I didn't understand why my tax had increased. But this misrepresents the concerns that I voiced on my abatement application, and that I have brought to you today.\*

At least 50 other households in our small town have filed for abatements for 2021, a sizable number for a town as small as Lyme. For myself, I have to wonder if the intent of the reassessment, which was equity, has been met in reality, as the outcome seems to so many to be unfair. I hope that this is of concern to the SB as well.

Now, my questions;

1. Do you have the power to change your decision about my abatement?
2. What information do I need to provide to change your mind?

\*Here is what I wrote in my application for an abatement for 2021:

- Section E: My 2021 tax bill is 20% higher than the bill from 2020. Of the other properties between 150 and 300 DCH (Route 10) on the east side of the road, which is where my property is, I see that my increase is the highest. Taxes for 232 DCH remained about the same, and the rest increased between 2.5% and 14.5%. My neighbors at 310 DCH, however, received a whopping 10% decrease in their bill. There is so much variation in this neighborhood despite there having been little-to-no renovation or other obvious upgrades over the past year, that the assessment system must be carefully reexamined. All of these properties should see a roughly 4% increase in their bill over last year.
- Section F: The assessment of 2020 shows a value of 208,000. With no upgrades or other changes other than basic maintenance, an increase in assessed value to 291,100 is without merit. What could such an increase be based on? This especially when the assessor did not visit my property. What comparable properties did he base his decision on?