Re: 410 Kramer Ave Assessment Appeal

To Whom It May Concern,

This letter gives Chris McGraw, my agent, permission to speak on my behalf, Christine McGraw, during the appeal hearing Monday May 2, 2016. Please call with questions or concerns.

Regards,

Christine M. McGraw Cell (907) 738-0720

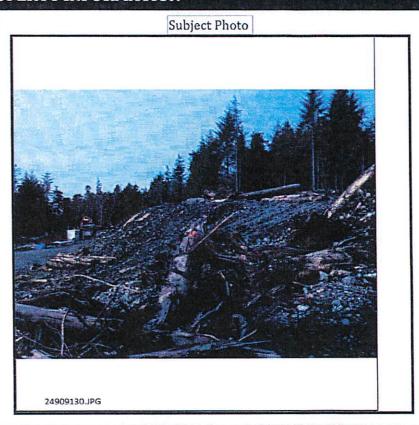


Owner:	McGraw, Cl	nristine	Owner			
Location:	410 Krame	r Ave				
Parcel No: 2-4909			egal: Lot One (1), North Woodbury Subdivision, according			
Prop Type:	Vac		o. 2014-2, Sitka Recording District, First Judicial t, State of Alaska.			
Hearing Notice Mailed: 4/1		4/19/2016	Appeal 2016-01			

PROPERTY INFORMATION

General Data Year Built Total Area Prop Style: No Data Total Finished Living Area Re-Appraisal Date: 12/23/2015

Land Data	a	Zoning Type R1						
Sq.Ft. 14,0			Acres	0.323				
Topography	Slop	Sloping						
Shape	Average							
View	Good							
Drainage	Average							
Access	Easement							
Parking	Onsite							
Street	Gravel							
Water	Public							
Sewer Pu		ublic						
Waterfront				0.00				



VALUATION INFORMATION

2016	Owner's Requested Value:	Assessed Value:	Appeal Value:		
Land Values:	\$0	\$52,700	\$52,700		
Bldg Values:	\$0	\$0	\$0		
Totals:	\$0	\$52,700	\$52,700		

BOARD FINDINGS

2016	BOE Recommended Value	Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law Upheld	Changed
Land Value:			
Bldg Value:			
Total:			

Roid alpallo

RECEIVED MAR 2 3 2016

City and Borough of Sitka Assessing Department Petition for Adjustment of Assessed Valuation

General Information

Your property has been assessed according to procedures established by State and local regulations which require all property to be assessed at 100% of market value. Market value means the estimated price which the property would bring in a sale between a willing seller and a willing buyer both conversant with prevailing general price levels.

Any person who receives notice or whose name appears on the assessment roll may appeal to the Board of Equalization with respect to any alleged error in the valuation or omission not adjusted to the taxpayer's satisfaction. If you feel that your property, if placed on the open market could not, within a reasonable period of time, command a selling price equal to the assessment, PLEASE COMPLETE THE ATTACHED FORM AND FILE IT WITH THE ASSESSOR'S OFFICE PRIOR TO THE FILING DEADLINE OF APRIL 15, 2016, 4:45 P.M.

If the Assessor is unable to adjust the value to your satisfaction, you will be notified of the time that the Board of Equalization will hear your appeal. The following information may be of value to you during the appeal process.

- 1. The Board of Equalization is a quasi-judicial body and not a legislative body. As such, it can rule only on evidence presented and only within the confines of pre-existing law. The Board cannot pass new legislation, nor can it change existing legislation to accommodate petitioners, regardless of the merits of the cases presented.
- 2. In all cases, the burden of proof lies with the petitioner, and not with the Assessor. The only grounds for adjustment of an assessment are proof of *unequal*, *excessive*, *improper*, *or under valuation* based on facts that are stated in a valid written appeal or proven at the appeal hearing. According to law, the Board of Equalization, unless convinced otherwise, must vote to sustain the Assessor.
- 3. For a complete presentation of an appeal, all information requested should be produced, whether it is requested by this petition, by the Assessor, or by the Board.
- 4. In stating your case, it is recommended that all major points of disagreement be submitted in writing on the space provided, (or on a separate sheet if necessary), to be supplemented by verbal argument during the hearing.

Return forms to:

City and Borough of Sitka
Assessor's Office
100 Lincoln St., Room 108, Sitka, Alaska 99835
Ph: 907-747-1822 Fax: 907-747-6138

City and Borough of Sitka Petition for Adjustment of Assessed Valuation Real Property

Date Filed: 3-22-16
The deadline for filing an appeal with the Assessor is April 15, 2016. However, appeal of the Board of Equalization, in what is deemed to be unusual circumstances; by unanimous vote may waive this time provision. The Assessor <i>must be</i> contacted during the 30 day appeal period.
Parcel Identification No. 2 - 49 09 - 130 - 000 - 0000
1. I, Christine mcGvaw, representing Christine McGvaw The owner of the above identified property, hereby request the Assessor review the assessment of said property.
2016 Assessed Value:
Land \$ 52,700.00 Building(s) \$ Total \$ 52,700.00
Please answer the following questions for the information of the Assessor and the Board of Equalization in considering this appeal:
A. What date was the property acquired? July 2014
B. What was the full consideration/price? _ \$ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \
C. Did this price include any furniture/ fixtures? If so, List approximate value\$
D. What do you consider the market value?
Land\$ 0.00 Bldg\$ Total\$
E. Have you ever offered this property for sale? YesNoX
F. Have you ever received an offer? Price/when No G. have you had the property appraised in the past 2 years? \$
G. have you had the property appraised in the past 2 years? 3
3. There is an error or omission on the assessment of this property for the following reason(s):
I believe this property to be worth \$0.00 because
it is in a high visk landstide area. The city of sitka
Wort + allow a structure or occupancy or 40 Krayner
The addition of book will loan Maney on
this property this property can never be sold for any more
this property. This property can never be sold for any money therefore giving it so.00 market value.
Print Name: Christine Migral
Sign here:

For Assessor's Office Use:

Parcel Identification No. 2-4919-130 Appeal No 2016-01
Action by Assessor
Property was reinspected, building officials and public works
were interviewed and no development restrictions were
in place at January 1, 2016. Ascess was blocked
due to safely concerns. Therefore no change in
Value was warranted as nothing had changed
smee the value was reduced as a result of the
land slide The assessment is equal to other properties
Attested by the landslide. All land values were
reduced by 50% for the risks involved with each property. See Assessor's Diseussion attached).
property see Assessors Procession
Signed: Wendy Laurence Date: 4/1/16
City and Borough of Sitka Assessor
Adjusted 2016 assessed value:
Land\$ 52,700 Building\$ 0 Total\$ 52,700
I hereby acceptrejectthe foregoing assessed valuation in the amount of \$
Signed:Date:
Petitioner



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APPEAL GUIDELINES:

Alaska Statute 29.45.110(b) The appellant bears the burden of proof. The only grounds for adjustment of assessment are proof of unequal, excessive, improper, or under valuation based on facts that are stated in a valid written appeal or proven at the appeal hearing. If a valuation is found to be too low, the board of equalization may raise the assessment.

APPELLANT INFORMATION:

The property owner failed to provide factual information to support this appeal by the April 22 deadline. Factual support of all filed appeals can consist of property-specific appraisals, photos, drawings, insurance estimates, and/or cost-to-cure estimates, and is required in order to meet the burden of proof which rests upon the appellant, per AS 29.45.210(b).

ASSESSOR'S DISCUSSION:

Assessor's Parcel No(s). 2-4909-130 - 410 Kramer Ave - Christine McGraw					
Owner's Opinion of Value:	Assessed Value:				
\$0	\$52,700				

Appeal Points Summary:

- Property assessments are valued January 1 annually, therefore only information prior to January 1, 2016, can be considered for this appeal;
- Benchland land sales generally ranged in value from \$100,000 to \$110,000 (raw land sales);
- Subject property was purchased for \$110,000 in 2014 (raw land with road access & right of way utility improvements);
- A landslide impacted this property, resulting in reduction and freeze of 2015 & 2016 raw land values at \$52,700, fifty-percent of the 2015 (impact year) market value estimate;
- Property owner requests \$0 valuation on appeal for 2016 contending no value due to high risk landslide area
- · Appeal request denied:
 - External risk discount has already been applied to land market value
 - Property was valued with a standard R1 land valuation model based upon R1 land sales city-wide 2002-2015 for equity among all land owners; these sales were the basis for this valuation conclusion
 - Appellant has provided no alternative valuation information (sales, analysis or cost to cure estimates) to support this appeal

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Background:

Benchland land sales were transferred from city to private ownership in 2014 and were absorbed into the market during 2014-2015. The development area consisted of an area of above-average market appeal with various view lots along Kramer Avenue, a gravel road with utilities in the right of way.

Background (Continued):

Resulting land sales were predominantly in the \$100,000 to \$110,000 range for unimproved raw land. The average lot size in this immediate area was 16,000 square feet and the average sales price was \$110,000; this translates to about \$6.88/sf for raw land. Lot development required property-specific site-prep and extension of the utilities from the roadway to each lot. Exact development costs for each lot are unknown, but costs were estimated to have generally ranged from \$20,000 to \$50,000. Site improvements do add value to what can then be marketed as build-ready improved land, but due to the 2015 landslide and the subsequent disaster revaluation, any potential value increases for water, sewer, or electrical improvements were not captured, as values were frozen at their raw land levels.

Sitka General Code 4.12.045 provides for a disaster revaluation of taxable property affected by a natural disaster if the change in assessed values pre- and post-disaster exceed ten thousand dollars. Assembly action declared the August 18, 2015, landslide a natural disaster and as a result the 2015 assessed valuation of this property was reduced by 50% from \$105,400 to \$52,700 due to the external obsolescence represented by the landslide event and subsequent access issues. This 2015 revised value was then rolled forward for the 2016 assessment, as required by the statute.

In summary, 2015 disaster revaluation land values for the immediate impact area were raw land value only, with no consideration given to owner-improvements. Ms. McGraw was one of those property owners receiving this disaster revaluation; she accepted the 2015 disaster revaluation of \$52,700, which is the same value that was rolled forward for this appeal.

2015 Assessed Valuation:

Ms. McGraw's initial 2015 Assessed Valuation for a vacant lot was \$105,400, (raw land value only, because it was vacant as of January 1, 2015). Her disclosed 2014 sale price was \$110,000. Construction of her home began in 2015 and the resulting market value was to be placed upon the rolls for the 2016 valuation. The landslide occurred on August 18, 2015, demolishing her home. All development was halted and as of the January 1, 2016, valuation date the lot remained untouched from its impacted state with no further development. Kramer Avenue was not fully restored until February 2016, at which time legal access to this property was restored. Therefore, as of January 1, 2016, Ms. McGraw's lot was a vacant lot with restricted access, and underground utilities possibly still in place. The value of the utility improvements was not captured as the condition of those utilities was unknown at the time of inspection on December 23, 2015.

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The 50% land value reduction factor was chosen after extensive research and analysis, with the City and Borough of Sitka's past-practices and the City and Borough of Juneau's (CBJ) masswasting policy being weighted most heavily.

2015 Disaster Revaluation Conclusions:

Market value is ideally determined by arms-length market sales, but market activity following a landslide can be non-existent. In the absence of market data from the immediate impact area we can rely on past practices, best-practices, and economic theory for guidance.

Market Sales: There were no observed market sales within the upper Benchland area after the landslide, nor were any landslide risks quantified at that time (August 19-December 31, 2015). Four post-slide market sales did occur in the area immediately below Kramer Avenue, with no observed reductions in value. These sales were confirmed by various local appraisers and realtors and consensus was that this incident caused pauses in pending transactions, but eventually all four transactions closed post-slide.

Analysis of historical post-landslide sales shows that properties do resell after a stigma period, with no reduction in value. Discussions with appraisers and real estate professionals concluded the affected properties were of some value, but determining that value would be a challenge. Therefore, past practices were researched for further guidance.

Past Practices: Research of assessing files indicates landslides have affected Sitka road-accessible properties since the 1970's with typically little to no reduction in land values. Post-landslide valuations have generally provided no reductions, but when given were very conservative (historically 0-30% negative adjustments if any). Therefore, a negative 50% reduction is relatively generous when compared to past practices of the City and Borough of Sitka Assessing Department, and given the lack of property-specific costs to cure from the appellant to support a zero value. In fact, this 50% reduction factor represents a \$98,800 reduction from its full market value of \$151,500.

The following history of post-landslide valuations has been included for reference:

- 1977 Cascade Creek Landslide-(0%) No Adjustments to Assessed Values
- 1980 1500 Block of Halibut Point Rd-(0%) No Land Adjustment but soils/slope study was required for future development
- 2006 1500 Block of Halibut Point Rd-(30%) Land Adjustment on one of five affected properties only, but plat notes & cost to cure applied,
- 2006 1500 Block of Halibut Point Rd-RESALES of these affected properties
- 2015 1500 Block of Halibut Point Rd-RESALES of these affected properties
- 2011 Cascade Creek Landslide-(0%) No Land Adjustments to Assessed Values, Building Values Were Adjusted for Damages

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- 2014 Cascade Creek Landslide-(20%) Land Adjustments Applied
- 2014 Starrigavan Slide-Remote No Properties Affected

<u>Best-Practices:</u> Best-practice research indicates that the City and Borough of Juneau is the only southeast municipality to have an established mass-wasting (landslide) valuation policy already in place. The City and Borough of Juneau assesses land values in identified high-risk areas at 50% of market value and provides reductions that are commensurate with risk mitigation costs for moderate- and low-risk areas. This policy was weighted heavily for this valuation.

Economic Theory: Determining the market value of the subject property is difficult at best. Real estate markets are imperfect by nature, and are highly localized. The supply of land is fixed, and the demand for land can be quite volatile. This is evidenced in Sitka by our very tight residential land vacancy rate of 3% city-wide. This creates for steady demand even for challenged properties. Therefore, let's take a look at the definition of market value to help in this valuation determination:

Market value is the "most probable" price which a property should bring in in a competitive & open market under all conditions requisite to a fair sale, the buyer and seller each acting prudently and knowledgeably, and assuming the price is not affected by undue stimulus.

Market price is not determined by a specific buyer and seller within one unique transaction; moreover it is the most probable price the market will bear as evidenced by the typical buyer and seller in an arms-length sale. Arms-length market sales provide us with the data which is necessary to make these value judgments in the assessment process, and light of the landslide events of 2015 this will take some time.

In the absence of solid market data, economic theory would indicate that a decrease in demand for properties in landslide areas, when combined with a very steady and low supply of available residential properties, would lead to a decrease in overall market prices in the affected area. This decrease is difficult to measure without a detailed economic analysis and thus for simplicity this 50% reduction was used for this appeal valuation.

Value Conclusion:

Per SGC 4.12.040 and Alaska Statute 29.45.110 the Assessing Director is <u>required</u> to value all property equitably at <u>market value</u>. Market value is determined by arms-length market sales. Although there were no land sales following the slide in the immediate area, a valuation model of historical (2002-2015) city-wide R1 residential land sales supports the Assessor's valuation conclusion as both non-excessive and equitable between like properties.

Value Conclusion (Continued):



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The R1 residential land valuation model indicates an estimated full market value of \$151,500 for this property; the reduced disaster land valuation of \$52,700 is 35% of that full market value and adequately accounts for the factors that make this property inferior to other similar properties. Landslide risks for this property were not quantified as of January 1, 2016, and limited knowledge of historic post-landslide sales would not have been readily apparent to measure this risk in any discernable way. Landslide risk information as it becomes available during 2016 will be used to assist in the valuation of this property moving forward, but because of the January 1, 2016 valuation date cannot be used for this appeal.

The appellant's 2015 disaster revaluation was the result of a 50% discount to the land site value. Although the home being built was completely destroyed, there was no building discount applied as there were no buildings on the tax roll for the 2015 & 2016 valuation dates. The 2015 Assessed Value of \$105,400 was supported by the 2014 sales price of \$110,000. The 2015 land value was reduced to \$52,700, and that value was rolled forward for the 2016 Assessed Valuation, which is under appeal here.

The appellant bears the burden of proof and has failed to provide any evidence to support the assertion that this property has no value, and in that instance you are mandated to uphold this valuation per AS 29.45.210(B). The property, even in its current state, is still benefited by the infrastructure of roads, utilities, and general government services such as police, fire, planning and schools etc. Assessments are simply the method to spread the cost of shared services such as these. A reduction to a zero value would be imprudent and improper.

In light of the foregoing information, the Assessing Department respectfully requests that you uphold the 2016 Assessed Valuation of \$52,700. This value is supported by the evidence presented, with every effort made to ensure accurate and equitable valuations between all properties. Bringing an assessed valuation of land to zero would bring about inequities among property owners in this area and would not be warranted given our state and charter mandate to assess all property at market value.

Reference:

AS 29.45.110. Full and true value.

(a) The assessor shall assess property at its full and true value as of January 1 of the assessment year, except as provided in this section, AS 29.45.060, and 29.45.230. The full and true value is the estimated price that the property would bring in an open market and under the then prevailing market conditions in a sale between a willing seller and a willing buyer both conversant with the property and with prevailing general price levels.

AS 29.45.210. Hearing.

(a) If an appellant fails to appear, the board of equalization may proceed with the hearing in the absence of the appellant.



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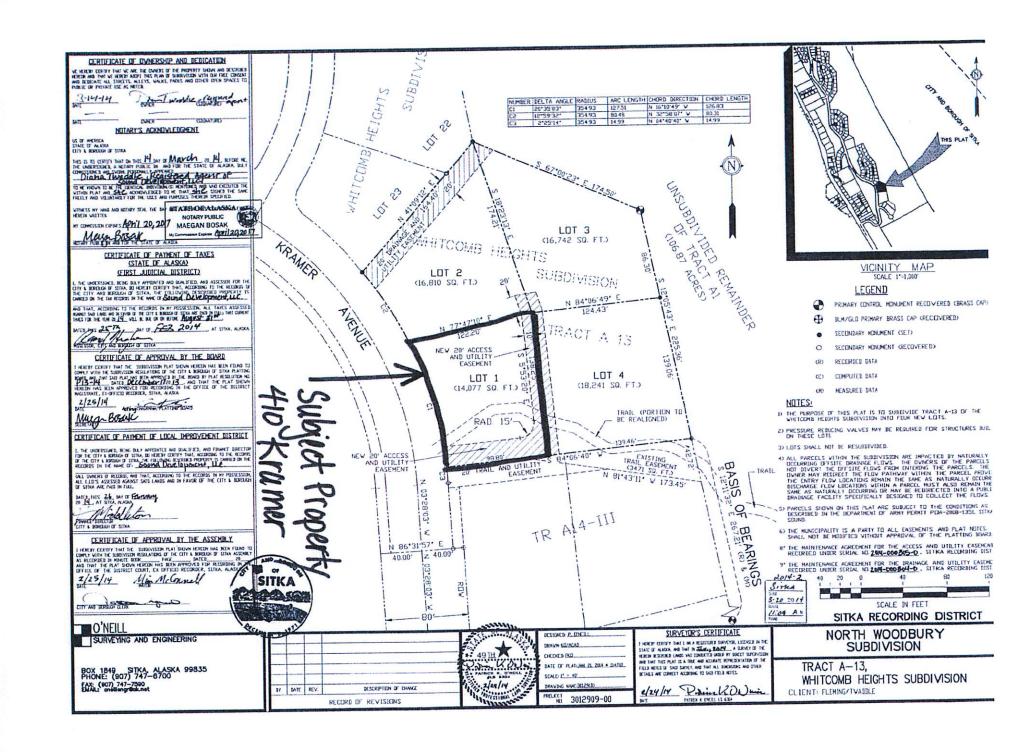
(b) The appellant bears the burden of proof. The only grounds for adjustment of assessment are proof of unequal, excessive, improper, or under valuation based on facts that are stated in a valid written appeal or proven at the appeal hearing. If a valuation is found to be too low, the board of equalization may raise the assessment.

(c) The board of equalization shall certify its actions to the assessor within seven days. Except as to supplementary assessments, the assessor shall enter the changes and certify

the final assessment roll by June 1.

(d) An appellant or the assessor may appeal a determination of the board of equalization to the superior court as provided by rules of court applicable to appeals from the decisions of administrative agencies. Appeals are heard on the record established at the hearing before the board of equalization.



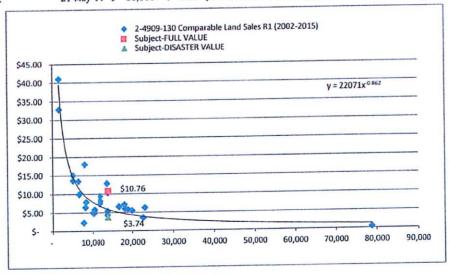


24909130-R1 SALES MODEL

City & Borough of Sitka R1 Land Sales Model	2016	0.2245 Easement	-	14,077 Total Square Ft	$\mathbf{Y} = \mathbf{C} * \mathbf{X}^{\wedge (\mathbf{P})}$	22071 C	-0.862 P
Valuation Date	April 25, 2016	Lasement		rotal oqualor (
Parcel Number 2-4909-130	2-4909-130		0%	Trend Factor			
Zoning	R1	0.000	0.0000				
P	-0.8620	-0.8620	-0.8620 0.0000				
X^P	0.0003305	0.0010					
PSF VALUE	\$7.29	\$2.19	\$1.09				
C	22071.00	2274.20	0.00				
$Y = C * X^{(p)}$	100%	30%	15%				
		Easement					
PARCEL SQ FT	10,917	3,160	=				
BASE LAND VALUE	\$79,631	6914.89	0.00				
View Adjustment	0.10	0.10	0.10				
Site Improvements (Clearing, Paving, Drive \$5-\$15k)	0.20	0.20	0.20				
Superior Adjustment	0.00	0.00	0.00				
Neighborhood Adjustment	0.45	0.45	0.45				
Inferior Adjustment	0.00	0.00	0.00				
Overall Factor	1.75	1.75	1.75	\$ 151,455			
		412.100		6 151 500			
	\$139,400	\$12,100	\$0	S 151,500			
	\$0	\$0	\$0	151 500			
ADJUSTED LAND VALUE ROUNDED				S 151,500	2016 Land Value		
PER SQUARE FOOT ADJUSTED	\$12.77	\$3.83	\$0.00				
2015 Disaster Revaluation Value	\$3.74			S 52,700			
2016 Assessed Value	\$3.74			\$ 52,700			

R1 Sales from ALL SALES MASTER 2016-04-20

R1 Sales from ALL SALES MASTER 2016-04-20								
DADCEL	O LOCATION	SALE DATE	PRICE	SP/SF	BUYER	SELLER	ZONE	LAND SF
			\$ 151,500	Market Street Street Street	Sound Development, LLC	City & Borough of Sitka	R1	14,077
	r 410 Kramer	05-Sep-14		\$ 3.74	Sound Development, LLC	City & Borough of Sitka	R1	14,077
	2 NHN Kramer Ave	16-Sep-13	The second second	\$ 0.40		City & Borough of Sitka	R1	78,868
			\$ 143,800	\$ 6.25		City of Sitka	R1	23,003
	8 JACOBS CIR 114	15-Feb-12		\$ 13.60		Morris B. Renee B Pierce	R1	5,000
	0 HIRST ST 507	07-Nov-13		\$ 13.42		Michael & Jacqueline LaGuire	R1	6,334
	00 711 Biorka St	02-Jul-02		\$ 6.39		Samuel & Beverly Skaggs	R1	8,135
	1 704 Biorka St			\$ 9.89		Christopher & Tiffany Bryner	R1	6,575
	00 623 Merrill St	23-Sep-11			Dean & Dorothy Orbison Com. Prop Trust	Larry & Karla Zervos	R1	13,837
	00 613 Lake St		\$ 177,000 \$ 75,000		Charles Garner	Wingert Development, Inc.	R1	13,924
	08 610 Versa Place	24-Jul-15	CHARLEST OF THE PARTY OF THE PA	\$ 4.31		Wingert Development, Inc.	R1	13,919
	07 608 Versa Place	29-Mar-16		\$ 8.13		Larry & Maryann Calvin	R1	12,000
	54 504 Charteris St	06-Aug-13			and the second s	Cecilia Maisel	R1	7,753
	00 503 Shennet St	13-Jan-14		\$ 2.26		Sound Development, LLC	R1	16,810
	32 440 Kramer Ave		\$ 110,000	\$ 6.54		Sound Development, LLC	R1	16,742
	34 430 Kramer Ave		\$ 110,000	\$ 6.57		Sound Development, LLC	R1	18,241
	36 420 Kramer Ave		\$ 110,000	\$ 6.03		Robert Kirkman	R1	1,538
	00 420 Katlian Ave	31-Jul-12		\$ 32.83		Boyd Didrickson	R1	1,538
	00 420 Katlian Ave	22-Aug-13			Scott K. Saline	Clyde & Valerie Bright	R1	5,000
	00 408 Dearmond St	27-0ct-14		\$ 15.00		Sound Development, LLC	R1	19,960
	22 240 Kramer Ave		\$ 110,000	\$ 5.51		Sound Development, LLC	R1	18,949
	26 220 Kramer Ave		\$ 110,000	\$ 5.81		Sound Development, LLC	R1	18,245
	20 210 Kramer Ave		\$ 110,000			Kernneth & Alice Cameron	R1	10,456
315090	01 2009-A Halibut Point Rd	14-Mar-16		\$ 5.74		Rebecca Bender	R1	8,321
248350	1940 Dodge Circle	17-Jun-13		\$ 7.81		Michael & Jocelyn Webb	R1	14,000
247500	02 1727 Edgecumbe Dr		\$ 145,000		Thomas & Melissa Henshaw	Clyde & Valerie Bright	R1	7,997
247670	00 1709 Edgecumbe Dr		\$ 144,000		Paul Haavig	Gerik P. Shinn	R1	10,274
149400	01 1502 Halibut Point Rd	09-Jan-15		\$ 4.87		Gerik P. Shinn	R1	10,073
149400	02 1500 Halibut Point Rd	06-Jan-15		B. 8000	Larry P. Shinn	William & Iola Jolley	R1	12,000
	08 1403 Johnston St	23-Sep-11		\$ 7.50		City & Borough of Sitka	R1	18,102
249100	09 118 Jacobs Circle		\$ 129,100	\$ 7.13		United Methodist Church	R1	12,000
	03 1105 Furuhelm St		\$ 112,000		Martin Enterprises, Inc.	Wingert Development, Inc.	R1	22,581
	03 108 Nancy Ct	21-May-14	\$ 80,000	\$ 3.54	Jon Martin & Amanda Grearson	wingert bevelopment, inc.		22,001





City and Borough of Sitka

100 Lincoln Street • Sitka, Alaska 99835

Coast Guard City, USA

April 19, 2016

Christine McGraw 1911 Dodge Circle Sitka, AK 99835

RE: 2016 Assessment Appeal – Property ID 2-4909-130 – 410 Kramer Ave.

Dear Ms. McGraw:

I have received a copy of your timely filed appeal of the above referenced parcel. In light of the concerns that you expressed, this office will be available to review any and all market data submitted as evidence that this valuation is unequal, excessive, improper, or under-valued. You as the petitioner bear the burden of proof and must demonstrate sufficient grounds for appeal by providing evidence to the contrary by the appeal packet deadline date of April 22nd. Please keep in mind that market data for this appeal must apply to the tax year at hand, calendar year 2015, and cannot be considered if it is dated January 1, 2016, or after. All properties are valued for ad-valorem purposes as of January 1, and any information dated after this date will be pertinent information for the next tax year.

Tax year 2015 evidence that can be considered consists of any of the following:

- (1) Any comparable sales data.
- (2) Any engineering reports pertaining to this property.
- (3) Any estimates of costs to cure any potential deficiencies with this property.
- (4) Any estimate of value reports prepared by a fee appraiser.
- (5) All insurance policies relevant to this parcel.

I am available to discuss this appeal and any evidence you feel should be considered for submission. Please feel free to contact me with any questions, comments, or additional information you have to include in the Board of Equalization packet which will be distributed to the board members on Monday April 25th, 2016, one week prior to the May 2 Board of Equalization hearing date. Submission of evidence is mandatory to substantiate this appeal and needs to be received by this office no later than 5:00 p.m. on April 22nd, 2016. You may at any time withdraw this appeal by signing and submitting the enclosed withdrawal form.

Sincerely,

Wendy Lawrence Assessing Director

Findings of the Board of Equalization

Appeal:	Granted	Adjusted	Denied							
Adjustment:	Land\$	Buildings\$	Total\$							
assessment valuatio	I Certify that the Board of Equalization for the City and Borough of Sitka has established the foregoing assessment valuation in this particular case; that the property owner has been duly notified of such board action by copy hereof; that a copy has been furnished to the Assessor for appropriate roll entry.									
Signed:			Date							
Clerk, Board of Equalization										
I Certify that the act roll this	ion of the Board o	of Equalization in this	s case has been recorded on the assessment							
date,		_, 2016								
Signed:										
	rough of Sitka Ass									

City and Borough of Sitka Legal Department 100 Lincoln Street Sitka AK 99835 Phone (907)747-1821 Fax (907)747-7403

Memo

To: Mayor McConnell and Assembly Members

From: Robin Schmid, Municipal Attorney

Date: May 2, 2016

Re: Board of Equalization Procedures

These are the legal procedures regarding the Board of Equalization hearings set for Monday, May 2, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. Although many of you already know, for new members, the Assembly sits as the Board of Equalization to hear and decide property tax appeals, and two property tax appeals have been filed this year.

Board of Equalization hearings are different from the other meetings at which the Assembly votes on ordinances and resolutions.

- 1. Please do not discuss the issues or merits of any particular property tax appeal with either the Assessor or any person who has appealed before the Board of Equalization meets. (Those who appeal are called "Appellants.") Following this advice will allow the Board to make decisions based on the record before it. Following this advice will also help prevent the disqualification of the Assembly Member involved or even the invalidation of the decision made by the Board of Equalization.
- 2. Unlike other Assembly meetings, Board of Equalization hearings are contested adversarial proceedings in which the Appellant taxpayer and the Assessor choose the witnesses, who are subject to cross-examination by the other side. The procedure used in Sitka has been as follows:
 - A. Appellant makes presentation, with each witness subject to cross-examination
 - B. Assessor makes presentation, with each witness subject to cross-examination
 - C. Appellant gives rebuttal of Assessor's presentation (no new evidence)

- D. Assessor gives rebuttal of Appellant's presentation (no new evidence)
- E. Appellant makes closing argument
- F. Assessor makes closing argument
- G. Appellant makes rebuttal closing argument
- 3. The presiding officer of the Assembly presides over the Board of Equalization. The presiding officer exercises such control over the proceedings as is reasonable and necessary. One duty is to enforce time limits, which of course should be announced in advance.
- 4. Another duty of the presiding officer is to rule on the admissibility of evidence at the hearings. The Board of Equalization is not restricted to the formal rules of evidence used in court, but instead follows rules consistent with general rules of administrative procedure. The rules of evidence in Alaska's Administrative Procedure Act are attached.
- 5. The taxing authority has broad discretion in deciding among recognized valuation methods. The appeal from a determination by a Board of Equalization on an assessment is appealable to the Superior Court. The question for the courts in reviewing a determination on an assessment is "whether there is a reasonable basis for the taxing authority's method." If the court finds such a reasonable basis, to prevail in court the taxpayer must show fraud or the "clear adoption of a fundamentally wrong principle of valuation."
- 6. At the Board of Equalization hearing, the burden of proof is on the Appellant. The only grounds for adjustment of an assessment are "proof of unequal, excessive, improper, or under valuation based on facts that are stated in a valid written appeal or proven at the appeal hearing." The Assessor is presumed to have done his job and based it on the best information he can procure. Mathematical exactness is not required.
- 7. An Appellant appealing an assessment does not need to prove the correct amount, range, or method of valuation. However, the Appellant cannot just say the Assessor is wrong or be critical of the method used, they must present independent evidence themselves. If they manage to do so, the burden then shifts to the Assessor to introduce credible evidence which substantiates the assessment.
- 8. The Board of Equalization needs to adopt written findings. Findings to facilitate review by a court and assist the parties. The findings should address the arguments made by the Appellant taxpayer and the Assessor, particularly those arguments made by the side that does not prevail. In your packet you will find the Assessor's suggested Findings of Fact.

I will be present for the hearings, and I will work to assist the Board to prepare those written findings which could be voted on and adopted by the Board at such time as the Board may direct. The Board of Equalization shall certify its actions to the Assessor within seven days of the hearing.

9. If the Board chooses, the Board may deliberate in executive session to decide the property tax appeals it hears. AS 44.62.310(d)(1) (Open Meetings Act does not apply to a

governmental body performing a judicial or quasi-judicial function when holding a meeting solely to make a decision in an adjudicatory proceeding). Given that the Board's role resembles that of a panel of judges or a jury, there should be no one else present but members of the Board if the Board elects to deliberate in executive session. If the Board has questions regarding the applicable law, the Board could come out of executive session and request answers from the Attorney in open session.

10. The same members of the Board of Equalization must be in attendance throughout the hearing, and only those members who have been in attendance throughout the hearing may vote on matters before the Board.

RLK/slj

Attachment