

**CITY OF SAINT PETER, MINNESOTA**

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS**

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF APPEAL AND EQUALIZATION MEETING  
MAY 19, 2020**

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a regular meeting of the Saint Peter Board of Appeal and Equalization of the City of Saint Peter was conducted by virtual software on May 19, 2020. Under M.S. 13D.021, the City is able to conduct meetings by electronic means in the event of a state-wide emergency. Governor Walz has declared a state-wide peacetime emergency and as such City Council meetings will be conducted remotely using GoToMeeting software until further notice.

A quorum present, Mayor Zieman called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. The following members were present through the virtual platform: Councilmembers Ed Johnson, Keri Johnson, Shanon Nowell, Brad DeVos, Stephan Grams, Emily Bruflat and Mayor Zieman. The following official was present: Nicollet County Assessor Lorna Sandvig.

Mayor Zieman and Councilmember Grams have completed the training for Board of Appeal and Equalization members.

Sandvig described the increases that were applied in various residential neighborhoods in Saint Peter as well as apartments, commercial and industrial property and mobile home parks. Sandvig indicated State Statute requires the County's valuations to be within 90%-105% of the sales that occurred in the community between the periods October 1, 2018 – September 30, 2019; and because the valuations were below that range, the County was required to increase valuations to reach the threshold.

Mayor Zieman informed the audience that the Council would hear all the appeals and make a decision on each appeal at the end of the meeting.

Jerry Chua, 121 West Madison Street, addressed the Board to appeal the increase on his property which was valued at \$178,300. Chua cited several properties he felt were comparable to his own which had received increases less than the 9.52% applied to his property. Sandvig reported that all the properties received the same 9.52% increase on the structures, but differences in the final valuation were based on the condition of the properties and depreciation and not just the square footage of any of the properties. Mr. Chua continued to press his belief that he had been treated unfairly and reported that in Texas and Florida where he previously lived, the market valuation was based on the sale price of the property and it remained that amount until it was sold the next time. Mayor Zieman noted that practice, commonly called "spearing", was illegal under Minnesota law and encouraged Mr. Chua, if he didn't like the Board's decision, to appeal further to the Nicollet County Board.

Scott and Sarah Moe, 822 South Fourth Street, did not appear for their scheduled appointment and their appeal was not heard.

James Wendroth, owner of vacant land on North Third Street, appealed his valuation of \$23,500 for a parcel on an unimproved roadway that did not have City water, sewer, storm water, or curb and gutter. Wendroth indicated it would cost \$27,000 to put those services in to the property and the lot would then be valued at over \$50,000 which was more than any other lot in St. Peter. Mayor Zieman indicated there were very few building lots in St. Peter and asked Wendroth if he would like to make the improvements. Mr. Wendroth declined.

Matthew Byers, 2020 North Third Street, appealed for a reduction in the proposed \$328,800 valuation of his property that was purchased for \$340,000 in 2015 although the County's valuation was substantially less. Byers reported the increases in valuation applied to the home were unsustainable for an older home on the National Register of Historic homes and needed repairs to the property (roof, tuck-pointing, painting and chimney repair) would be more expensive in order to comply with the Register requirements. Byers stated he had sought financing to replace the roof on the home and the property appraised at \$340,000. Councilmember Grams indicated he had looked at purchasing the home before Mr. Byers bought the property and he felt it was overpriced in light of having no garage and no basement and needing substantial repairs.

There being no further in person appeals, the Board took the following actions:

- A motion was made by Bruflat, seconded by Nowell, to make no change to the \$178,300 valuation for the Jerry Chua property at 121 West Madison Street. With all in favor, the motion carried.
- A motion was made by Nowell, seconded by Johnson (K), to make no change to the \$23,500 valuation on the vacant lot owned by James and Karen Wendroth on North Third Street. With all in favor, the motion carried.
- A motion was made by Johnson (E), seconded by Grams to make no change to the estimated market valuation of \$328,800 for the Matthew Byers property at 202 North Third Street. With all in favor, the motion carried.

The Council also considered the recommendations for reductions in valuation from the County Assessor as follows:

- A motion was made by Johnson (E), seconded by Nowell, to reduce the valuation of the Thomas Gravelin and Cheryl Casteen property at 620 North Third Street from \$273,400 to \$254,800. With all in favor, the motion carried.
- A motion was made by Bruflat, seconded by Grams, to reduce the valuation of the Ryan Birr and Michelle Regnier property at 302 North Front Street from \$201,100 to \$197,800. With all in favor, the motion carried.
- A motion was made by Johnson (K), seconded by Bruflat, to reduce the valuation of the Paul Kaveney property at 1502 South Fifth Street from \$148,200 to \$126,100. With all in favor, the motion carried.
- A motion was made by Johnson (E), seconded by Nowell, to reduce the valuation of the David and Judy Kerr property at 1601 Old Minnesota Avenue from \$993,200 to \$927,800. With all in favor, the motion carried.

There being no further appeals presented, a motion was made by Johnson (E), seconded by Bruflat, to adjourn. With all in favor the meeting was adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

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Charles Zieman  
Mayor

ATTEST:

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Todd Prafke  
City Administrator