

Town of Lunenburg
Board of Civil Authority Meeting Notes
Tuesday, July 22, 2025

BCA Members in Attendance: Nancy Benoit, Chair; Harry Williams; Gary Briggs; Jim Peyton; Diane Peyton
Listers in Attendance: Karen Danforth

Notes

Chair Nancy called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm

James Abbruscato Property Tax Appeal:

Attendees: James and Karen Abbruscato

Each BCA member received a packet of information which included: June 4, 2025 letter from James regarding comparisons; copy of a letter from Bob Lund; June 16, 2025 letter from James requesting a hearing before the BCA; Residential Property Report Card; July 16, 2025 letter from Green Mountain Power.

Chair Nancy identified the property related to this appeal, which is on Maillet Road in Lunenburg, parcel ID # 018012.000. Nancy administered the oath to James and Karen and Lister Karen. Nancy confirmed that James had received written notification of the hearing, and he had no questions. Nancy asked if any of the BCA members had a conflict of interest and Nancy recused herself from this appeal.

Lister Karen presented the property on Maillet Road and confirmed that it is comprised of 12.2 acres of land and property tax appraisal was based on a value of \$43,900.

James was asked to present his case; summary points were:

- utility poles have been removed and cost to install is estimated at more than \$26,000
- water discovered after the purchase prevents building on part of the land
- comps given were for properties that were level, had power and had no water concerns
- storms in 2023 and 2024 washed out the culvert that James had to replace
- there should be a difference in value between land that you can build on and land you cannot
- "I paid too much for the land"

Karen offered a response from the Listers; summary points were:

- revaluation of this land could trigger a reappraisal of all Maillet Road properties
- grade levels are used to determine the functionality of the land. Abbruscato's grade level is 7

BCA members asked questions:

- does this property involve an identified wetland? Response: Unsure

-should a landowner be expected to do due diligence prior to purchasing a property?

Response: Felt this didn't apply in this instance.

-did James and Karen support the idea that any landowner who discovered an issue with their property after it was purchased be allowed to request a devaluation? Response: Yes, if there is a similar instance.

-are you planning to build on the property? Response: Property was purchased with the intent to build on it; probably would build at some point, but not in the area they had hoped.

An inspection committee comprised of Jim Peyton, Harry Williams and Gary Briggs was appointed to view the property. This is scheduled for Sunday, August 3, 2025, at 10:00 am

A BCA meeting was scheduled for Monday, August 11, 2025, at 5:00 pm in the Select Board office at the Town Office Building to hear the inspection report and to have further discussion.

Chair Nancy confirmed that the inspection will take place on Sunday, August 3, 2025, at 10:00am and the next BCA meeting will take place on Monday, August 11, 2025 at 5:00pm.

The meeting was recessed to August 11, 2025, at 5:00pm.

Donald and Kathleen Courtot Property Tax Abatement Request:

Attendees: Kathleen Courtot

Each BCA member received a packet of information which included: June 19, 2025 letter from Donald and Kathleen Courtot requesting a tax abatement. 2024 Property Tax Bill; May 28, 2025 Notice to Taxpayers of a change in Appraisal of Real Estate; July 8, 2025 letter notify the Courtot's of the date and time of the abatement meeting.

Chair Nancy called the meeting to order and introduced the property as 370 Wilderness Road in Lunenburg, parcel ID # 200126.001.

Nancy administered the oath to Kathleen Courtot.

Nancy confirmed that the Courtot's received written notice of the BCA meeting and asked if they had any questions. Kathleen responded that she was unfamiliar with the process and might have questions during the hearing.

Nancy asked if any members of the BCA had a conflict of interest with this hearing and all responded "no".

Nancy asked the Courtot's to state the category of abatement they based their appeal on and to present any supporting evidence. Gary confirmed that the category of abatement was "abatement of taxes where there is a manifest error, or a mistake of the Listers". Kathleen confirmed that they were not looking for a reappraisal of the property, but just an abatement of overpaid taxes due to the change in valuation done in 2024 in the amount of \$194,200 and in 2025 in the amount of \$150,100. She confirmed that they purchased the property in October 2023 and had been told a request to view their property for appraisal had been left on the gate on August 23, 2023. Kathleen pointed out that this date was before their ownership and confirmed that they had received no future notices regarding the appraisal. The Courtot's were onsite during the April 2025 inspection.

Lister Karen noted that the appraisers were unable to access the gated property when doing the appraisal prior to April 2025.

Kathleen noted that the information regarding the property was incorrect as it listed the following, which are not on the property: sewer, electric, water; and the square footage was incorrect. The actual square footage is 870.

Lister Karen confirmed that the refund amount would be \$823.52 if approved.

Chair Nancy moved to close the abatement hearing and informed the Courtot's that the Board would deliberate, and a written decision would be sent on or before August 22, 2025.

In deliberation, Jim made a motion to refund the amount of \$823.52 and it was seconded by Diane. It was noted that the 2024 appraisal was clearly a mistake.

The BCA meeting was ended.