

TOWN OF HIGHGATE

Board of Abatement

Thursday, April 5, 2018 @ 5:45pm

NOTE: All actions taken are unanimous unless otherwise stated.

A. Call to Order & Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by John Ferland @ 5:47pm

Present for this meeting were:

Board of Abatement Members: Clarence Miller; Dennis Nolan; Claude Chevalier; Connie Janes-Beyor; Wendi Dusablon; John Ferland; Shelley Laroche; Peter St. Germain; Aimee Reynolds; Patty Rainville; Sharon Bousquet; Joshua LaRocque (arrived 5:53pm); Steve LaFar (arrived 5:53pm)

Applicant(s): Rosemary Pease

B. Abatement Hearings

Pease, Neal & Rosemary
859 Ramp Road
Parcel # 0030000472

Rosemary Pease was present for this hearing. All board members introduced themselves and their role with the Town of Highgate. Mrs. Pease presented paperwork to show that she did, indeed, pay her property taxes on time through our MuniPay system on November 1, 2017 @ 16:59:05 (4:59:05pm). The deadline for taxes to be received is 5pm. She stated she started the process much sooner but found the system difficult to navigate and she became frustrated. Because this happened less than one minute before the actual deadline, Shelley did not receive the verification via email until the following morning. Penalty and interest were automatically applied after 5pm. Mr. & Mrs. Pease did pay \$182.10 on 2/5/18, leaving a small balance at the time of the abatement hearing of \$1.66. Mrs. Pease also noted that she had to pay a convenience fee to use the online system to begin with, so be charged penalty and interest when she should have been considered on time was frustrating. There was discussion on if the town has any policy on using the online system or if the town should have one. This was a very odd occurrence, uncharted territory for the town, so we are learning as we continue to have an online payment system. We have been using MuniPay for a few years now and it is becoming more popular as people are aware that the service is available. Motion by Claude Chevalier to abate the total amount of penalty and interest in the amount of \$183.76. Of that amount \$182.10 will be refunded to Mr. & Mrs. Pease for penalty and interest that they have already paid. This decision is referenced to item "C" in the About Abatement Publication and the board was in agreement that their taxes were paid on time, based on the time stamp of the credit card payment on the MuniPay system. The motion was seconded by Patty Rainville – **APPROVED**. A letter detailing this decision will be sent to Mr. & Mrs. Pease along with their refund check of \$182.10. This hearing was closed.

Richmond Group Partnership
62 Airport Road
Parcel # 0030000197

There were no applicants present for this hearing. Richmond Group Partnership had been noticed on this hearing as well as the State of VT. We did hear from Frank Von Turkovich earlier today (Richmond Group Partnership) that he was not planning to attend. This is the former Border Patrol building located at 62 Airport Road in Highgate. Richmond Group Partnership was leasing the building from the State of VT. The lease was terminated in 2014-2015 and it was not communicated to the Town of Highgate in any way until recently. The property was added to the tax sale list which got their attention and they contacted us. Paperwork with a property transfer tax return should have been submitted back when the lease ended, and it was not. We did receive a copy of the lease in May 2017 from Guy Tapper, State of Vermont, VTrans - Division of Policy, Planning & Intermodal Development, Aviation Property Management. He asked that it be recorded in the land records, which it was. A property transfer tax return did not accompany it, which is what would have switched it over into the State's name. In any event, it was after the April 1st

deadline and the tax bill remained in the name of Richmond Group Partnership for another cycle. We then received the PTTR from our town attorney in February 2018 so the transfer with our listers office could be completed. The taxes currently owed are for the 2016-2017 (\$3,389.09) and 2017-2018 (\$3,565.65), this does not include penalty and interest accrued. The State is willing to pay 50% of what is owed. There was discussion on how taxation works on properties owned by the State of VT. We received payments in lieu of taxes. We average about \$15,000.00 total per year from the State to this regard. Our attorney said we could try to go after the Richmond Group Partnership for the other half, but the legal fees could be excessive and there are no guarantees. The Assistant Attorney General for the State of VT is offering 50% and our attorney is advising we take it. The figure we are considering to abate is \$4,305.62. Connie asked about assessment values for state properties and how that works. Aimee Reynolds, lister, stated they are assessed in the same manner as everyone else. Connie also asked about the property coming off the grand list and the impact that will have. Motion by Claude Chevalier to abate \$4,305.62 (\$3,389.09 principal, \$271.13 penalty, \$645.40 interest) and accept the State's offer to pay \$4,096.98 with the penalty going to the collector and the interest and principal going to the town's general fund. This decision is reference to item "C" in the About Abatement Publication. The motion was seconded by Sharon Bousquet – **APPROVED**. This hearing was closed.

C. **Adjournment**

Motion by Josh LaRocque to adjourn the meeting @ 6:30pm. The motion was seconded by Claude Chevalier – **APPROVED**.

Minutes respectfully submitted by,



Wendi Dusablon
Town Clerk
April 6, 2018