

Town of Pomfret

Board of Listers

2025 Grievance Hearings – Minutes and Decisions

Board of Listers: Norm Buchanan (Chair), Rebecca Fielder, Neil Lamson

(All hearings were broadcast and recorded via Zoom)

May 28, 2025

10:00am

Appellant: Christopher Sollars

Property: 898 Clay Road, Parcel # 0614, SPAN 489-154-10120, House & 6.39 acres

Current assessment: \$567,550

Mr. Sollars asked questions about how the land and home values were determined, and the Listers explained the valuation process and the differences between levels of grade and condition, as well as influence factors for neighborhoods. Mr. Sollars then described the structures on the property, stating that though he purchased the property for \$580,000 last year, there were numerous issues with the house that were not apparent at the time of the sale. For instance, deferred maintenance had led to significant deterioration of the roof surface and foundation sills, resulting in leaks and interior mold growth. Several systems including the furnace needed repairs or replacement, and the presence of a buried oil tank has complicated the repairs. Additionally, the attached garage has suffered structural damage and is caving in on the side. He estimates that the cost of repairs and materials to do so reduce the marketable value of the property to approximately \$475,000.

The Listers arranged to visit the property and completed their inspection on May 30th. They found that Mr. Sollars statements regarding the condition of the house were accurate, and additionally that unfinished space in the basement level was incorrectly reflected on the property card as finished space.

After the site visit, the Listers corrected the square footage calculations and adjusted the grade of construction from Good to Average- for the house and attached garage, resulting in a new value of \$492,320.

10:30am

Appellant: Keith Sawyer

Property: 10449 Pomfret Road, Parcel # 0189, SPAN 489-154-10514, House & 18.96 acres

Current assessment: \$341,780

Mr. Sawyer was looking for clarification on the value of the land he acquired from tax sale last year, which connected two other parcels of land (including his homestead) as they were all now contiguous parcels. He was concerned that the connecting land was in floodplain at the low point and the remaining land was primarily unbuildable hillside, so it should have little value on its own. The Listers explained that now that the parcels are merged, the overall value of the 3 parcels has actually been reduced. As standalone parcels, the total value of all three with housesites would have been \$425,310, and the merging of the three and reduction to a single housesite has saved him about \$83,500 in value. At this point, Mr. Sawyer's questions and concerns had been addressed, and he withdrew his application to grieve.

No change.

May 29, 2025

10:00am

Appellant: Matthew Coogan

Property: Clay Road, Parcel #0618, SPAN 489-154-10747, 2.1 acres (vacant land)

Current assessment: \$165,100

Representatives for the appellant: Patricia Coogan (wife), Rachel Arsenault (broker)

Mrs. Coogan explained that they had sold the majority of their land and the house last summer, only keeping 2 acres in the family so that their children may have the opportunity to build someday. They did not anticipate that the standalone value of the 2 acres would be so great, and feel that the land is substantially overvalued, especially compared with other properties that have sold in town of similar size. Ms. Arsenault presented some comparables and spoke to the market value of the land. She emphasized that the land slopes aggressively, that there is no current access (driveway), and no utilities are run. There are no views on the property and limited building and septic sites, as well as a prohibitive septic replacement envelope for the neighbor's property. There is an old road through the center of the property (part of former layout of Clay Road) that was discontinued in the 1950's due to erosion from the adjacent brook, but it is sunken in and would not be able to serve as an access. She argued that the land is buildable but it will be

an expensive process, and that if the family decides to sell the 2 acres the market won't support the \$165,100 value the town has assessed it at. They feel a more accurate value is \$65,000, which would be more in line with the comparables they presented which averaged \$32,000 per acre.

The Listers performed a site visit and walked the property on May 30th. They found the land was as the property owner described – oddly shaped, sloping, with difficult access and a substantial portion of the land being unusable due to the neighbor's septic easement. There is potential for 1-2 building sites, as well as sweeping views to the Jericho hills of Hartford.

After viewing the property and making adjustments to the value due to the location and land features, the Listers lowered the value to \$86,600.

May 30, 2025

1:30pm

Appellants: Brendan Moore and Barrett Phillips

Property: 161 Maple Ridge Drive (formerly Windy Lane), Parcel #2504, SPAN 489-154-10742, House (incomplete) & 6.4 acres

Current Assessment: \$571,070

Mr. Moore and Ms. Phillips questioned the completion percentage and grade of the attached garage first, as it was listed as 100% complete but has no doors, insulation, sheathing, or other finishes. They agree with the completion percentage of the house, but argue that the building materials used do not correspond to a grade of VGd+, as they used the standard 2x6 construction and plywood throughout the house and attached garage structures. The standalone garage has an unfinished interior with no cladding or insulation. They clarified the number of bathroom fixtures in the house as well as the heating system.

After verifying the square footage and some discussion, the Listers reduced the level of completion on the attached garage to match the house at 56%, adjusted the grade of both structures from VGd+ to VGd and the detached garage from Good to Avg. The adjusted value of the property is \$523,220.