

The 2022 New Kent County Board of Equalization (BOE) met on Wednesday, June 15, 2022 in the Boardroom of the Administration Building, 12007 Courthouse Circle, New Kent, Virginia, at 9:30 a.m.

ROLL CALL: A roll call determined Mr. William Wallace, Mr. Mathew Starr, Ms. Amy Pearson, Mr. Russell Beyer and Mr. Maurice Gauthier were present. Representing the Commissioner's Office were Commissioner of Revenue Laura Ecimovic, Chief Deputy Commissioner Shannon McLaughlin, Director of Real Estate Alice Duncan and Real Estate Property Inspector Cindie Reddington. Mr. Wallace was presiding as chairman and Board of Supervisors Deputy Clerk Wanda Watkins was serving as secretary.

HEARINGS/CONSIDERATION OF APPEALS: Hearings were scheduled for the following PID numbers: 5859, 5265, 7773, 109067 and 111260.

**SEARS, James Dallas, PID #5859** - Mr. Sears was not present and had not called to indicate he would not be attending. Mr. Wallace motioned to affirm the Commissioner's assessment of \$334,800. He noted this meeting was open to the public and he had some concerns regarding statements made by Mr. Sears in his appeal application. Ms. Ecimovic indicated she was prepared to address those statements. Mr. Wallace asked if she felt the comments should be referred to the Sheriff's Department. Ms. Ecimovic indicated she was not too concerned about the comments as Mr. Sears was known to file an appeal with every reassessment cycle and each appeal included similar comments. Mr. Wallace noted a motion was on the floor. The motion was then seconded by Mr. Gauthier. Ms. Ecimovic interjected and noted her office had reviewed Mr. Sears' case and was recommending an assessment reduction. She reported Mr. Sears was correct that staff had not been out to his property. She noted properties were inspected every six years and his property was scheduled for inspection in 2023. She reported Mr. Sears' home had continued to appreciate at an abnormal level as he had not done upkeep and staff was recommending reducing the assessment from \$334,800 to \$297,700. This reduction was due to the condition of the home as well as items removed from the property but not reported to the Commissioner's Office for removal from the account.

Mr. Wallace asked for additional information on the property's depreciation. Ms. Ecimovic reported all properties were considered to be in average condition and the grading of the Sears property was lower and the quality of materials had been noted. After review, the Sears' property had been moved to "below average" condition at 66%. Mr. Beyer asked if Mr. Sears was aware of the recommended change. Ms. Ecimovic indicated he had not been notified because his appeal was pending the decision of the BOE. She also reported Mr. Sears would not accept mail from her office.

Mr. Wallace withdrew his earlier motion and asked what the BOE was to do if the Commissioner had changed the assessment. Ms. Ecimovic indicated the BOE would have several options including affirming the recommended change or adjusting the assessment to another value of their choosing. The BOE would then notify Mr. Sears regarding their decision. Ms. Pearson noted if the BOE affirmed the Commissioner's recommendation and Mr. Sears accepted the adjusted value, his real estate taxes would be

less. Ms. Ecimovic confirmed. Upon a motion made by Mr. Wallace and seconded by Mr. Gauthier, the Board voted to affirm the Commissioner's reduced assessment of \$297,700, by a vote of 5:0.

Ms. Ecimovic spoke in regard to statements Mr. Sears had included with his appeal application. She specifically addressing nine different claims made by Mr. Sears with the following summarized statements:

1. Mr. Sears had never met with Commissioner's Office representatives in the past 13 years and routinely returned mail to the office unopened.
2. Mr. Sears had not spoken with the Commissioner this year or two years ago and it had not been necessary for him to "quote the FOIA" to get his assessment as his assessment had been mailed in the same manner as all other assessments.
3. The property had last been inspected in 2017 and was scheduled for reinspection in 2023. Properties were inspected every six years unless there was new construction or an earlier inspection was requested.
4. The property was 5.73 acres and the home, constructed in 1992, was 1,680 square feet. The home had been given a grade of C- - which was considered to be less than average condition. An additional 12% market adjustment for additional depreciation had also been made. The detached garage was assessed at \$31.15 sq ft and the home at \$110.48 sq ft therefore the value of the garage was not higher than the home.
5. An additional 6% market adjustment had been made due to the roof damage and below average condition of the home.
6. A list of comparable properties provided by Mr. Sears had been reviewed and it was noted for the record, they were not comparable to the Sears property.
7. In response to Mr. Sears' assertions that some elected officials and members of the BOE had received special treatment in the reassessment process, a list of assessments for those properties for 2020 and 2022 had been provided and in each case, increases ranging from 18.98% to 41.3% were noted.
8. In response to Mr. Sears' suggestion that Ms. Ecimovic had received a 33% raise, she noted she had never received such an increase and her salary was not based on assessment values. Her salary was based on the population of the County.
9. Mr. Sears had also claimed the BOE membership was not in compliance with Code of Virginia Section 58.1-3373 which indicated "30% of the members of such board shall be commercial or multi-family residential real estate appraisers who are licensed and certified by the Virginia Real Estate Appraiser Board to serve as general real estate appraisers, other commercial or multi-family real estate professionals or licensed commercial or multi-family real estate brokers, builders, developers, active or retired members of the Virginia State Bar, or other legal or financial professionals whose area of practice requires knowledge of the valuation of property, real estate transactions, building costs, accounting, finance or statistics." It was noted at least two of the five BOE members, or 40%, met this criteria.\* She also reported BOE term limits had been removed in the 2009 General Assembly Session by House Bill 2133 (Code of Virginia Section 58.1- 3374.)

\* 2022 BOE members and their occupations were as follows:

William Wallace - Retired Associate Broker/Realtor, Francisco, Robinson &

Associates, Inc.  
Mathew Starr - Real Estate Developer  
Amy Pearson - Chief Financial Officer, Virginia Workers Compensation  
Commission  
Russell Beyer - Former Franchisee, Business Owner, Manager  
Maurice Gauthier - US Navy Retired (Captain), Retired CEO of a NASDAQ  
listed corporation, Co-founder and Co-owner of two New Kent businesses

Mr. Wallace asked Ms. Ecimovic if she believed Mr. Sears would agree with this information and should the BOE send him a letter responding to his claims. Ms. Ecimovic noted that regardless of whether Mr. Sears agreed or not, she had provided this information for the record to note that the disparaging comments made in regard to other elected officials, herself and members of the BOE were untrue. Discussions regarding concerns surrounding Mr. Sear's comments continued and it was suggested perhaps the Sheriff's Office or Commonwealth's Attorney should be notified. It was noted for the record that if Mr. Sears was not pleased with the adjustment affirmed by the BOE, his next recourse would be Circuit Court. After further discussion, it was decided to provide the same notice to Mr. Sears as would be provided in any other appellant.

**HERON, William and CHAMPIGNIE, Joyce, PID #5265** – Mr. Heron stated he had met with Ms. Ecimovic earlier in the year and had been provided with a wealth of information including a book on the reassessment process. He had also met with the BOE in 2020 and his concern this year was with the value of his land. He was in agreement with the value given to the home and other improvements. His property was a small lot with 50 feet on Kent Lake and it was his understanding that all lots on Kent Lake had been assessed at \$81,000. He further reported his neighbor with a larger lot and over 200 feet on the lake had also been assessed at \$81,000. Referencing the book provided by Ms. Ecimovic, he indicated it spoke about fair equalization and he didn't think it was fair for all lots to be given the same assessment. He felt he was being overcharged at \$81,000 and reported an appraisal had been conducted in conjunction with a refinancing and the appraiser had questioned the \$81,000 land value. The appraiser had indicated they could not find another lot on the lake with only 50 feet of frontage valued at \$81,000. The land value was his only concern.

Mr. Wallace asked if Mr. Heron had a copy of the appraisal. Mr. Heron indicated he did not. Mr. Wallace asked if he could recall what the appraisal had been for the land. Mr. Heron reported New Kent's total assessment had been \$313,500 and the appraiser had suggested the total value was more in the \$295,000 to \$300,000 range. Ms. Pearson asked if Mr. Heron felt the property value should be less than it had been in 2020-21. Mr. Heron indicated he felt the value in 2020-21 had been fair but he did not think the 2022 value was fair. He did not understand why all Woodhaven lots were assessed at \$81,000 and noted there were numerous larger lots with more water frontage with the same value. Mr. Wallace noted the BOE would have to look at the total value and could not separate the land from the improvements. He turned the floor over to Ms. Ecimovic.

Ms. Ecimovic reported the subject property was a 1,549 sq ft single family home built in 2019. The lot had been purchased in 2017 for \$38,000 and the home had been purchased in May 2019 for \$279,950. The 2022 assessment had been \$340,900, Mr. Heron had appealed to the Commissioner's Office and adjustments lowering the total value to \$313,500 had been made. The lot was .23 acre, was sloped to the rear and was considered good waterfront. She provided an overview of assessments in Woodhaven specifically focusing on lots. Due to the lack of vacant land sales in Woodhaven, the allocation and extraction method had been used to determine land values. This method involved gathering information regarding comparable site values and recent sales to develop a ratio between the site and the total value. A 20% ratio had been developed for interior lots and a 30% ratio for water front lots. Woodhaven was assessed per lot and no differential in sales based on water frontage had been noted. She reported there were several water front neighborhoods in the County in which frontage and water depth were factors but the biggest factors in Woodhaven were the view, type of slope and obstructions that could not be removed. The Heron property was a very common site in the community and while Mr. Heron was only concerned about the land value, the total had to be considered. This was an improved parcel and given the \$313,500 total, the ratio was 29.02% for the land which supported the initial 30% allocation. There had been 27 improved qualified sales in Woodhaven over the past year and all lots had been valued in the same manner. Because the few lots sold had been sold in gross (multiple lots) making it impossible to determine the sales price of each individual lot, these were considered unqualified sales. Although the sales approach for assessment was most common and allocation and extraction was not typical, the lack of lot sales had forced this method and there was no other neighborhood in New Kent from which sales could be used to develop assessments. She also noted Woodhaven was a complex neighborhood with many homes 30 or more years old and some newer homes such as Mr. Heron's. She drew attention to a list of comparable sales and noted similarities and differences between each and the Heron property. Mr. Wallace asked if there were any other water front lots for sale in New Kent. Ms. Ecimovic reported she was not aware of any. Mr. Wallace asked if she could go out of New Kent County. Ms. Ecimovic indicated she would only go out of the County if there was no other choice. The Heron parcel was an improved property and the comparables provided were in his neighborhood and were close in value. She noted Mr. Heron's tax bill would be based on the overall assessment and not specifically on the land value. She understood Mr. Heron's question and agreed that the value of the land had gone up significantly but the allocation method had been the only way to assure uniformity. Mr. Heron indicated the discussions had given him a better explanation and reported the only lots he had been able to find on water had been in Patriots Landing and he understood they were not similar to Woodhaven. Ms. Ecimovic reported she would never compare a Woodhaven property to Patriots Landing because the values would be much higher. She also noted she would not use Five Lakes as a comparable and stated there had been no reason to go outside of the Woodhaven neighborhood with 27 qualified sales. She noted although Chickahominy Shores was similar, it was in an entirely different part of the community, did not have vacant lot sales and was located on big water (Chickahominy River) with access to the James River. Ms. Pearson questioned differences in values on several of the comparable properties. Ms. Ecimovic reported the value difference was the result of issues with the views and also

noted several of the lots appeared to have water frontage which was actually mud. Mr. Heron stated he understood the process much better and appreciated Ms. Ecimovic's time and noted she had invited him to take one of her classes so that he could learn more. Ms. Ecimovic indicated they encouraged property owners to take their cases to the BOE if they were not happy with the values and noted the BOE could have a different opinion. Mr. Starr noted in this case the land value was not an exact science because there were no qualified lot sales and as a result, the best equation had been developed to get the value. He added that given the comparables, it appeared the overall value of the property was accurate. Mr. Heron agreed and stated that after today's discussion, he no longer had an issue with the overall value and appreciated the presentation Ms. Ecimovic had made. Upon a motion made by Ms. Pearson and seconded by Mr. Starr, the Board voted to affirm the Commissioner's assessment of \$313,500 by a vote of 5:0.

**COSBY, SR., Warren M., PID #7773** – (Warren M. Cosby, Sr. was deceased and the property had passed to his son, Warren M. Cosby, Jr. This transfer had not been recorded in the Circuit Court Clerk's Office.) Mr. Cosby reported he had spoken with a law professor and could not understand the assessed value of his property. He reported this 5.3 acre parcel had been surveyed off from a larger parcel about 30 years ago and was now valued at \$37,700. He had met with Commissioner's Office staff and had explained that three of the acres was swamp. The Commissioner's Office had listed one acre as cleared which was not correct and one acre was noted as a building site assessed at \$26,976.96. He questioned how any of the property could be assessed as a building site when it was covered with trees and included a 30 foot ravine. He questioned how he could be taxed on something that was not present. Mr. Wallace asked Mr. Cosby if in his opinion, there was a buildable lot on the property. Mr. Cosby indicated he had been a general contractor and did not consider the parcel to be buildable because any home would have to be built on 20 foot poles so the water could run under it. He also reported that given current county ordinances and setbacks, the home would have to be built in the center of the ravine. He had applied for a building permit in 1990 and could have gotten away with building closer to the swamp at that time but that was no longer possible due to the federal government. Mr. Wallace reported he had been a real estate agent for 30 years and understood the Chesapeake Bay Act had changed everything but given his experience, he was of the opinion that every lot was a buildable lot. Mr. Cosby indicated he didn't disagree but suggested it wasn't a question of if it was a buildable lot and added that it wasn't buildable unless he applied for a building permit. Mr. Wallace suggested Ms. Duncan may be able to address the question of whether it was buildable or not. Mr. Cosby stated it was not a question of whether or not it was a buildable lot, there was nothing on the property and he questioned how he could be taxed on something that was not there. Mr. Wallace stated that one acre of every parcel was considered a buildable lot. Mr. Cosby reported the property was covered with trees and County ordinances would not allow building on a one acre lot. Ms. Ecimovic reported the assessment was based on the highest and best use which was not necessarily the current use and the highest and best use of vacant land was residential. Mr. Cosby reported the property was zoned A-1, was over half a mile from a hard surface road, had a 20 foot right of way for ingress/egress and no bank would be willing to lend on it. Mr. Wallace suggested Ms. Duncan should present her information and he turned the floor over to her.

Ms. Duncan distributed handouts and noted staff did recognize all of the issues Mr. Cosby had noted. She drew attention to a deed which depicted a dedicated 30 foot right of way. Mr. Cosby argued that the deed did not say right of way but did note ingress/egress. Ms. Duncan noted the document showed a 30 foot right of way. Mr. Cosby noted Ms. Duncan's document was a plat. She agreed and noted the deed for the property referenced the plat depicting the 30 foot right of way. Mr. Cosby continued to argue that the access was for ingress/egress and the footage had never been stated in the deed. Mr. Wallace asked if this was a deeded right of way or prescriptive. Ms. Duncan reported it was a deeded right of way. Mr. Cosby agreed it was a deeded right of way for ingress/egress but continued to argue that the footage was never stated and suggested the plat would "not hold up" but the deed would. Mr. Starr stated he didn't believe the width of the right of way mattered and suggested they should listen to Ms. Duncan's report. Mr. Cosby again stated no bank would lend on the property. Ms. Duncan drew attention to the deed which had been recorded with the plat and referenced the 30 foot right of way. She noted Mr. Cosby had appealed to the Commissioner's Office and his case had been reviewed. The 5.29 acres was currently assessed for \$37,700 and staff felt they had accommodated the noted imperfections. The one acre home site was valued at \$27,000 which had already been adjusted due to the closeness to the RPA (Resource Protection Area). A dirt road factor had been added, steepness had been added and three acres were noted as wasteland. Six comparable properties ranging from two acres to 6.94 acres had been reviewed. The two acre parcel had been considered because the Cosby property included three acres of swamp. This two acre lot had sold for \$73,000 and had since been resold for \$85,000. She reported Mr. Cosby's comparables were large acreage (15.5 to 328 acres) and he had divided the assessed value by the number of acres. She noted the price per acre on a 328 parcel could not be applied to a five acre parcel. Using the smallest of Mr. Cosby's comparables assessed at \$122,700, Ms. Duncan noted the one acre home site had been assessed at \$63,000 while the subject property was assessed at \$27,000. Mr. Cosby reported there was no home place on the 15.5 acre parcel. Ms. Duncan noted there was a home site on all of the parcels with the home site being valued separately from residual acreage. The same method had been used to value the Cosby property as had been used for all other properties and consideration had also been given to factors reducing the value of the Cosby property. Mr. Wallace noted that regardless of parcel size, all parcels were assessed with a one acre buildable site because it was assumed a home could be constructed somewhere on the property. Mr. Cosby stated it would be necessary to override County ordinances and building code to be able to put a house on this property. He asked Ms. Duncan if the two acres selling for \$73,000 was flat or a ridge. Ms. Duncan reported ridges on the Cosby property had been taken into consideration. Mr. Cosby asked for details on the topography of the two acre parcel. Mr. Wallace noted that what the BOE/assessors were considering was what price a parcel could be listed for and what it would sell for. Ms. Duncan noted the home site on the two acre parcel had been valued at \$70,000. Mr. Starr suggested the discrepancy was that Mr. Cosby did not see the property as having a buildable site. Mr. Cosby agreed and indicated he had asked the Commissioner's Office to come out and walk the property but that had not been done. Mr. Starr stated it may be that there was no buildable lot but the BOE would need proof. Mr. Wallace indicated buildability could not be determined by

walking the property and a survey with wetlands delineation would be needed. Mr. Cosby stated he would have to bring in a private assessor. Mr. Starr suggested if the delineation showed no buildable site, that would be sufficient. Ms. Ecimovic reported there were a number of things that would be accepted as unbuildable including lack of perk (or a discount for an alternative system), County denial of a building permit or any level of legal proof. She noted an assessor would not be able to provide legal proof but could provide a value. She understood this would be a difficult build and a difficult finance but there was no proof to warrant marking the property as unbuildable. Unbuildable property would be valued at \$5,000 an acre which would make the value of this parcel approximately \$25,000. Mr. Wallace noted if a survey proved the parcel was unbuildable, an option would be to combine the parcel with the neighboring parcel. Ms. Duncan noted vacating the line between the parcels would result in one lot and would reduce the number of home sites. She drew attention to a GIS map depicting the RPA delineation which had been considered in the assessment. Mr. Wallace noted the RPA could change as floodplains changed. Mr. Starr stated the property may not be buildable but based on the information provided, it appeared a house could be built on the property. Ms. Duncan agreed that based on the GIS map it did appear there was sufficient room for a home in front of the ravine. Mr. Cosby reported that when it rained, water was running across this parcel from the neighboring property. Mr. Starr stated Mr. Cosby may be right but the BOE needed to have something to substantiate this fact. Mr. Beyer asked for the lowest cost option for Mr. Cosby to provide proof. Ms. Ecimovic suggested a failed perk test would be the cheapest but noted the property may perk and still not be buildable. Written proof from a professional would be needed and staff could not go out and walk the property and make that determination. Staff had already determined this was a less desirable property as was noted by the \$37,000 value for five acres. She reported five acres in New Kent would typically sell for closer to \$100,000. She added that if at anytime Mr. Cosby was able to gain proof from an engineer or something showing the property was unbuildable, they would consider it to be a factual error and the value would be changed. Mr. Starr asked Mr. Cosby if he knew an engineer who could look at the property. Mr. Cosby indicated he did. Mr. Starr noted if Mr. Cosby could get something to substantiate that the lot was unbuildable, it could lower the value by \$10,000 to \$12,000. Mr. Wallace stated the only way the BOE could change the value would be to have some written proof and combining the two lots would also reduce the assessment. He thanked Mr. Cosby for his presentation. Upon a motion made by Mr. Beyer and seconded by Mr. Gauthier, the Board voted to affirm the Commissioner's assessment of \$37,700 by a vote of 5:0.

**VASEK, Jason and Kimberly, PID #109067** – Ms. Vasek stated she did not have a deep appreciation for this process and did not understand it and the BOE would be seeing her every two years until she did. She did not feel the process was transparent and hoped the BOE would welcome this dialogue so it could be ensured the process was applied in a consistent and transparent way. She didn't get the "transparent" part and felt she had received an arbitrary number. Her goal was to better understand how the County had arrived at the value but when she filed for an appeal, the County was asking her to justify her number. She found this to be ironic, was hoping to bridge the gap and better

understand how the County had arrived at her number and the process behind it. She would then be able to share why she felt her assessment was inconsistent with others.

Mr. Wallace noted the BOE was under state regulations to accept the assessment from the County. If the property owner did not accept the County's assessment, they could file an appeal and make a presentation to the BOE to prove or disprove the assessment. He stated the BOE was in the property owner's corner and was tasked with making sure the assessment had been made correctly. If the property owner did not agree with the decision of the BOE, the next step would be Circuit Court. He noted it had been a second or third appearance for a gentlemen who had come before the BOE earlier in the day and he was learning more with each appearance. He noted that after Ms. Vasek presented her case, Commissioner's Office staff would then respond and the BOE would go from there.

Ms. Vasek stated the process was different than she had expected and she would do her best to present her case. She had looked at recent sales of three comparable properties all of which were assessed lower than her home. The value of her home had increased over \$300,000 in the last three years. She would be thrilled if she was a seller but she was not and was trying to live here but felt she was slowly being taxed out of her home. She felt it was confusing how the County kept getting to the property's current assessment and asked the BOE to tell her what they wanted her to share. Mr. Wallace indicated the BOE would like to hear why she felt her property was not correctly assessed. He noted she didn't have to go first and the Commissioner's staff could go first and explain the reasons behind the assessment. Ms. Vasek could then ask questions. Ms. Vasek was in agreement with the Commissioner's staff presenting first. Ms. McLaughlin reported the assessment had been based on 2021 sales. Because there had been no sales in Ms. Vasek's neighborhood, they had looked outside of the neighborhood and had also looked at trends within the neighborhood. Because Ms. Vasek had checked lack of uniformity as the reason for her appeal, staff had looked at information on neighboring properties. She drew attention to a handout listing all of the properties in Cooks Mill with 25 or more acres. Ms. Vasek stated she understood her area of the County was unique with larger lots and fairly substantial homes but it felt like the County had selected the biggest lot and the biggest house and they had ended up with a number leaving them shaking their heads. She added that when all you received was a piece of paper with a number on it, it was hard to grasp. Ms. McLaughlin noted all of the information was available online. Ms. Vasek stated it was not as easy to find as you would think. Ms. McLaughlin noted staff would have been happy to assist and stated they tried to be as transparent as possible. Ms. Vasek noted staff knew the website but when she was searching for information, she was overwhelmed because there was nothing pointing in the direction to find the information. Ms. McLaughlin noted it was complex and was not as simple as just pointing and clicking. Ms. Vasek indicated she would be silent and listen as Ms. McLaughlin shared how the County had arrived at her value.

Ms. Pearson asked Ms. McLaughlin if she had reviewed the comparables provided by Ms. Vasek. Ms. McLaughlin indicated she had reviewed them and agreed with the first one. She drew attention back to the list of Cooks Mill properties with 25 or more acres and indicated she wished to first address the question of uniformity. The list of properties



included notes on acreage within the RPA. Less than an acre of the Vasek property was within the RPA while more than 14 acres of another was within the RPA. Adjustments had been made to values for properties with larger RPA acreages. The Vasek house, with approximately 4,200 sq ft above grade and just under 1,500 sq ft in the basement, was the largest home in the neighborhood. She redirected attention to another list of all properties in Cooks Mill which would assist with determining uniformity and noted land values were determined by vacant land sales. Once those values were determined, improved sales were applied and land values extracted. She distributed handouts on comparables and reported that after reviewing five comparables, staff had felt the \$727,000 had been aggressive and adjustments had brought the value down to \$701,300. She agreed with Ms. Vasek's first comparable and had listed this property as staff's first comparable. She reviewed the comparables noting the similarities and differences between each and the Vasek property. Once adjustments were made for differences, the values ranged from \$671,000 to \$733,760. She had not used Ms. Vasek's second comparable (a much older home) because she felt better comparables were available which were more reflective of the value of the Vasek property. She had also not used Ms. Vasek's third comparable because it was located in the Colonies and subject to other adjustments because of the water front/access. She added that finding a home the size of the Vasek home with large acreage had made it difficult to find a perfect comparable. Ms. Vasek reported a home in Cooks Mill had recently been listed for \$750,000 but had sold for \$715,000. Ms. McLaughlin reported she had seen this property as pending and noted it had been on the market for a while. She also noted this home was smaller than the Vasek home and was on a smaller lot. Ms. Vasek stated it was the inconsistency of values that was a concern and noted this property had been assessed at a higher value than hers. She was a process engineer who was always trying to understand how numbers were formulated and how they were applied. She didn't understand how it was happening and felt it was a very arbitrary number. She had reviewed other properties and had found some with no increase and had wondered why. Ms. Pearson noted there were so many variables including things such as RPA and slopes. She noted the recommended \$701,300 was closer than the \$727,000 and even with the recent land sale, this adjusted value seemed more reasonable. Mr. Beyer asked if there could be any factual errors. Ms. Vasek reported to her knowledge there were no factual errors and noted she had worked on this with the Commissioner's Office a few years ago. Mr. Wallace also noted assessments were based on what had happened in 2021 and no sales in 2022 could be considered. Ms. Vasek noted she understood this, didn't appreciate that the County was assessing at 100% of market value. She felt this was a bad business practice and a "slippery slope" which would put her in the position every two years of not understanding how the value of her property had been determined. She understood it was a complex process but also noted it was frustrating to be on the receiving end. She wanted to pay her fair share but wanted to feel like everyone else was paying their fair share too. She reported finding a \$50,000 increase on one property while her increase had been \$183,000. Ms. McLaughlin noted increases were dependent on property type and the market and the County could not adjust all values by a percentage.

Ms. Ecimovic reported she offered a class which demystified the reassessment process. The classes were usually offered the fall prior to the reassessment and she would like to

add Ms. Vasek to the list if she was interested. She assured Ms. Vasek the values were not arbitrary and were set with the goals of fair market value and uniformity in mind. All of the information was put into a model, values were adjusted based on sales and then the remainder of properties were populated. Once populated, notices were sent to property owners. She understood how it may seem arbitrary but assured Ms. Vasek it really wasn't. She noted the Vasek home was one of the biggest homes with one of the largest lots and, because the property may not fit the model, it may be necessary to come to the Commissioner's Office each year for a closer look. She noted one of her goals was to be transparent and open, she understood finding the information on line could be difficult and her staff was available to assist. She also noted the state required assessments to be based on 100% of market value and the closer assessments were to this value, the more funding the County would receive in Public Service taxes from utilities such as Dominion Energy. She further noted New Kent was the only locality providing property record cards along with reassessment notices in an effort to make it easier to understand. Ms. Vasek reported that when she looked for her property on the County's website, she was not finding the information Ms. McLaughlin had shared. Ms. McLaughlin noted the particular page Ms. Vasek was referencing was hosted by a software company and was not designed by the County. She also noted they had an open door policy and urged citizens to call for assistance. Ms. Vasek noted appreciation for that and indicated that when she looked at the page for her property, it just felt like a number to her. Mr. Gauthier suggested the issue was that Ms. Vasek lived in a plus 2 sigma region of the model and her property was way over the edge because of the size of the land and the nature of the house. He noted this was about a model that had to be validated and verified and was updated every year by adding new sales. Because her property was in the plus 2 sigma region, she would always find herself having questions. He noted Ms. Ecimovic would show her how to answer them in the course. Mr. Wallace added that the only way to 100% validate the assessment would be when the property was sold. Ms. Pearson asked Ms. Vasek if she felt she could sell her home for \$701,300. Ms. Vasek confirmed that she did and noted she was not here just because of the number but she wanted to understand how the County had arrived at the number. Ms. Ecimovic noted questions surrounding percentage of change were often raised but the state did not allow percentage of change to be considered and values were based on the market. She added this was not a perfect science and she felt Ms. Vasek may see them every year. She stressed that they wanted everyone to be comfortable with the process and to not ever feel like staff was not happy to assist. Ms. Duncan suggested Ms. Vasek may be interested in a copy of the reassessment guide. She noted the guide as well as a wealth of other information was available on the County's website under the reassessment section. Ms. Vasek expressed appreciation for the information and the BOE's time. Mr. Gauthier reported he and his wife had lived in 29 different locations while in the military and had learned that there was not only a wide variance in the level of tax but also in the services received in return. He stated that of the 29 locations, New Kent was the best and they had selected it with a lot of thought. It was a great place and he had agreed to serve on the BOE because he was convinced property owners were treated fairly. Mr. Wallace also noted the Commissioner of Revenue was governed by the state and was required to have all assessments within 90% to 110% of market value. Ms. Ecimovic reported her goal was to get as close to 100% as possible. She gave Ms. Vasek a copy of the booklet

used in the course and indicated she would like to include her if she was interested. Upon a motion made by Ms. Pearson and seconded by Mr. Gauthier, the Board voted to affirm the Commissioner's reduced assessment of \$701,300, by a vote of 5:0.

**ORANGE FIELDS LLC, PID #111260** – Ms. Ecimovic reported Orange Fields LLC (Advance Auto) had filed an appeal which had included income and expense statements. The original assessment had been based on estimates and once the actual numbers were applied, the value had been reduced from \$2,447,200 to \$2,002,700. Orange Fields LLC had agreed that this adjusted assessment was within what they felt the range of the value of the property should be and had withdrawn their appeal. Mr. Wallace asked if Advance had built this store or had purchased it after construction. Ms. Ecimovic reported they had purchased the store for \$2,092,000 in 2017 which was slightly over the current assessment. Mr. Wallace asked what had been their concerns. Ms. Ecimovic stated the property had been purchased at the height of the market and because the income approach was based on available rents, etc. an adjustment was in order. Upon a motion made by Ms. Pearson and seconded by Mr. Starr, the Board voted to affirm the Commissioner's reduced assessment of \$2,002,700, by a vote of 5:0.

OTHER BUSINESS: There was no other business.

ADJOURNMENT: On a motion made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Mr. Wallace, the meeting was adjourned at 11:24 a.m.

Approved by email

William Wallace, Chairman

Date Finalized: August 4, 2022