

**SAUGATUCK TOWNSHIP BOARD
SPECIAL MEETING**

**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2010, 6:00 p.m.
SAUGATUCK TOWNSHIP HALL
3461 BLUE STAR HWY, SAUGATUCK, MICHIGAN 49453**

MINUTES

Supervisor Wester called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and noted the reason for the special meeting is to meet with the Board of Review, Township Assessor, and Township Tax Tribunal Attorney to discuss reasons for previous denials to lower taxable values on Saugatuck LLC parcels.

Members Present: Supervisor Bill Wester, Clerk Jane Wright, Trustee Chris Roerig and Trustee Jim Hanson.

Members Absent: Treasurer Pat Knikelbine.

Also Present: Tax Tribunal Attorney Steven Lasher, Assessor Sherry Mason, and Board of Review members Don Maeder, Jan Shashaguay, and Randy Jarzembowski.

Wester opened the special meeting to public comment. Hearing none, he closed that portion of the meeting.

Wester asked Lasher to give an update on the tax tribunal case. He stated both sides have hired appraisers; values for 2007, 2008, and 2009 are being appealed with 2010 most likely to be added; written appraisals will be due May 3rd with a July pre-hearing and a trial date to be set some time after that. Board asked several questions which Lasher answered.

Wester asked for the Assessor's opinion on the land values. Mason responded that she is very comfortable with the land values. Roerig asked the Board of Review members how they analyzed the values. Maeder reported the process the board goes through and an open discussion took place.

Questions were asked and answered until 6:45, and it was agreed to have Lasher send a letter to the petitioner stating we are not in a position to accept their offer to settle out of court at this time.

Wester then opened the meeting up for public comment. Dayle Harrison stated settling out of court for a low taxable value could impact the township for years. RJ Peterson stated even if you settle for a very low value it would increase when development takes place. Steve McKown asked if property sales could be used, and Lasher responded that Assessors can not, but tribunal cases can. Joe Milaukas asked how close the Appraiser will work with the Township, and Lasher stated the Appraiser will work with all pertinent information. Vaune Ploger asked if the township extra millage passes, what would keep McClendon from suing on the R-4 zoning issue. Wester stated we expect a lawsuit on that issue and it could be a lengthy process. Pat Denner stated that in hard economic times nobody wants a tax increase, however she is heartened by the Board wanting to spend the taxpayer's money wisely and feels this issue

is so important that she would not only pay the increase but contribute money as well. Wright stated donations to the General Fund are always welcomed and are tax deductible. David Swan verified all parcels are classified as residential and the previous industrial parcel that was used for boat building did so only under a special approval use. Swan asked if you can present to a tax tribunal, information where the owner has filed similar lawsuits in other communities. Lasher stated yes. Dayle Harrison stated the capital gains aspect could be interesting from the owner's standpoint if land values were to be divided as he proposed. Phil Miller asked who the two appraisers are. Lasher reported we have hired Michael Tarnow of Northern Michigan Real Estate Consultants and the petitioner has hired Ray Bologna. Marcia Perry said this has been an interesting meeting and asked if the township will be holding meetings to campaign for the extra millage proposal. Roerig stated we can not expend any funds promoting a ballot proposition, but any information is available through the office. He added one of the reasons for holding this meeting was to disseminate information to the public as to how the township is reacting to this and threatened lawsuits and be completely transparent. He stated we want to be sure we are doing the right things. Dayle Harrison talked about paying a fair price for the South Denison property as it was purchased through the Michigan Trust Fund.

Wester stated having no further business to come before the board we stand adjourned. Meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Jane Wright, CMC, Township Clerk

Date