

Mayor Dave Olson called the Board of Appeal and Equalization Meeting to order at 5:32 p.m. on April 15, 2019. Board present: Mayor David Olson, Councilmembers Matt Schutte, Tony Schultz, Cheryl Sanden and Emily Krage. City Staff present: Chris Peterson. Houston County Assessor's Office Staff present: Cindy Cresswell and Michelle Quinn.

The Mayor called on Cindy Cresswell to give a summary of the work the County Assessor's Office has completed to set 2019 property values for taxes payable in 2020. Cindy explained that as a result of a sales study of residential properties within the City that sold in 2018, the proposed values for residential properties in the City of Houston increased twenty-three percent. Michelle Quinn will conduct appraisals of residential properties in Houston this year to update property values for taxes payable in 2021.

Cresswell explained that for commercial properties, a county-wide sales data was used since there were not enough sales within the City of Houston to achieve survey results. The county-wide study resulted in an overall 12% increase to commercial property values, which was used as a basis for proposed commercial values in Houston.

It was noted that in addition to property values, another factor in determining property taxes is the levy of the taxing authority. For taxes payable in 2019, the City Tax Levy did not increase, Houston School District increased 6%, and Houston County increased 1.9%. Another comment was made that the State offers a Special Tax Refund for most Homestead Properties with a 12% or greater increase in property taxes.

The Mayor then called on the attendees who signed up to speak at the meeting.

Steve Rischette – 402-404-410 S. Chase Street
Rischette commented on the increase in his values.

John Jacobson- 414 E. Spruce Street
Jacobson commented that his value went up 60% in last two years.

Marilyn Erickson – 113 S. Grant Street
Erickson commented that her value went up and went up again. Cresswell reported that the County received an inquiry from Erickson and reviewed the property. Cresswell said the review resulted in an estimated market value of \$68,500, whereas the proposed value was \$75,200.

Roxanne Grondin – 113 W. Cedar
Grondin reported her value of the commercial property went up by 13.5%. The County Assessor looked at the property a couple years ago.

Judy Williams – 408 W. Anderson
Williams commented her value went up 107% from 2017 to a value of \$206,100. She questioned this value and if there was any factor for not having city water and sewer available to the property. Cresswell did not have the data on hand for Williams' property, but said the availability of water/sewer could affect the property values. Their office will check this when performing the appraisals this year.

Bill Hoskins – 1009 E. Elm Street
Hoskins did not agree with the proposed value on the two vacant lots next to his home. Other lots in the area are on the market for roughly \$10,000. Although his lots are a bit larger, he did not believe they should be assessed at \$21,900 or \$31,000.

Dick and Evonne Snow – 134 S. Grant Street

Snow stated they own the commercial property of the Snow Beauty Salon and Storage. Discussion occurred regarding the County wide basis for commercial values. Cresswell noted if there are six sales in five years, Houston would get its own sales study.

Terry White – 213 E. Plum Street

White stated his value is much more than others in his neighborhood.

Larry Graf

Graf provided information on the proposed values of three parcels he owns.

The value for the vacant lot next to his duplex increased from \$5,100 to \$6,300

That of the duplex went up to \$96,000, and value of a six-acre parcel is proposed at \$16,200.

Robin Wedl – 309 W. Cedar Street

Wedl had written a letter, and Cresswell handed out copies to the Board during the meeting. Cresswell noted that their recommendation if asked to review property would be to increase value not decrease.

Diane Johnson – 213 S. Jefferson Street

Johnson had written a letter, and Cresswell handed out copies to the Board during the meeting. Cresswell commented that this property was valued with a grade 6 quality, and she does not see how the value could get any lower.

The Mayor announced the Board would go through the list and consider any changes.

Steve Rischette – 402-404-410 S. Chase Street

Determination: no official appeal was made – insufficient data

John Jacobson- 414 E. Spruce Street

Determination: no official appeal was made – insufficient data

Marilyn Erickson – 113 S. Grant Street

MOTION BY SANDEN, SECONDED BY SCHULTZ TO ADJUST VALUE TO \$68,500 BASED ON FACTS AND REVIEW BY THE COUNTY ASSESSOR; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Roxanne Grondin – 113 W. Cedar

MOTION BY SCHULTZ, SECONDED BY KRAGE TO MAKE NO CHANGE TO PROPOSED VALUE; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Judy Williams – 408 W. Anderson

County assessor will review how adjustments are made for city sewer and water availability.

MOTION BY SCHULTZ, SECONDED BY KRAGE TO MAKE NO CHANGE TO PROPOSED VALUE; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Bill Hoskins – 1009 E. Elm Street

Although Hoskins lots are larger, the proposed value is two to three times the value of the asking price of other lots in the area. Without lot size comparisons on hand, a new value could not be recommended during the meeting. Instead, a solution was discussed to revert to the current assessed value for one more year. MOTION BY SCHULTZ, SECONDED BY SCHUTTEE TO REVERT TO CURRENT ASSESSED VALUES OF \$17,500 AND \$25,300; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Dick and Evonne Snow – 134 S. Grant Street

Determination: no official appeal was made – insufficient data

Terry White – 213 E. Plum Street

Determination: no official appeal was made – insufficient data

Larry Graf

MOTION BY KRAGE, SECONDED BY SANDEN TO MAKE NO CHANGE TO PROPOSED VALUE; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Robin Wedl – 309 W. Cedar Street

MOTION BY SCHUTTE, SECONDED BY SANDEN TO MAKE NO CHANGE TO PROPOSED VALUE; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Diane Johnson – 213 S. Jefferson Street

MOTION BY SCHULTZ, SECONDED BY SCHUTTE TO MAKE NO CHANGE TO PROPOSED VALUE; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Motion to Adjourn: MOTION BY SCHULTZ, SECONDED BY SCHUTTE TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:33 PM; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Minutes by Christina Peterson, Houston City Clerk