

Eleilia Preston

From: Maya Benavente <mbenavente@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 12, 2024 7:08 PM
To: Rep. Julie Coulombe; Rep. Frank Tomaszewski; Rep. Mike Prax; Rep. Andi Story
Cc: Mike P Moriarty; Rep. Ben Carpenter; Rep. Mike Cronk
Subject: !! URGENT HB 347 comments and questions

Hello,

I read an article by Greg Adler 16 days ago in support of this bill. I'm glad that he was able to find Representatives like yourselves to sponsor HB 347 and make changes to the current tax assessment process.

I live in the Kenai Peninsula Borough area and last year we had a significant increase in the tax assessment of our home. I don't have all of the information in front of me now but our home tax assessment was greater than other homes with more acreage and more square footage. I can forward some emails that I had sent to Peter Micciche, KPB Mayor, if you like.

The KPB assessors office looked at sales of other 1.75 story homes from last year and **for examples** sake, those homes sold 150% over assessed value (only an example). KPB then applied that increase to all 1.75 story homes regardless of condition, square footage or acreage. There were numerous appeals and most allowed an inspector in and most saw their assessments drop based on the conditions of their homes. We did not allow an inspection because we agreed with the rating (home condition) but not the assessment. Our home is well maintained with nice curb appeal. As I asked around and starting pulling public information on the tax assessment of other similar homes or greater (more sq. ft/ more acreage) I found that our home was valued a lot higher than the 2 story / more acreage homes. We appealed and I provided 2 or 3 packets to the Appeals Board including the tax assessments of similar homes and two separate market appraisals by two local realtors.

One of the realtors, Nicole Lawrence of Seward Properties, represented us at the hearing due to a scheduling conflict. She argued some of the points made in HB 347 about market rate. Apparently KPB uses some formula (similar argument in HB 347) and the assessor didn't feel that they did anything wrong based on their policy. It was a lengthy hearing and we did receive a reduction but NOT enough in my opinion. Our assessment was still higher than local homes 2 stories or more and on more acreage. As happy as we were for receiving a reduction, we were still disappointed that the assessment wasn't more fair like a 15%-17% range. This was the general increase that most homes in the Seward area experienced.

Our next recourse would have been to file a lawsuit for breach of the statute where it states that a taxpayer shall pay his fair share. In our minds plus common sense plus our realtor market assessments, our home should not have been assessed higher than the 2 story homes with more square footage and more acreage. A lawsuit was a fight we didn't think we were prepared for financially or mentally and we didn't feel like we'd receive support from Borough administration. In the Borough's opinion, we had "won" our case.

I don't know if our case and the points we brought up are covered in HB 347 but please consider these thoughts and questions:

* What is a long form fee appraisal? Would our two market appraisals by local realtors have met the requirement? If not, why not? And if not, can you amend HB 347 to include a realtor's market appraisal? As argued, they are local to Seward and they know the Seward market.

* As written, I'm unsure if the appeals board only has to consider a long form appraisal as a means of lowering the assessment. In our case, I provided two separate market assessments by local realtors and a good number of public record tax assessments of similar or greater homes. I believe that the public record tax assessments should be evaluated because they 100% support the case of whether the tax payer is paying their fair share or over and above that.

* HB 347 is missing a key fact in that an increase in assessment should not be greater than homes that are greater than the owners. In our case, we have a 1.75 story home on 1 acre. There are various homes in our area that are 2.0 story on 1.5 or 2 acres assessed less than ours.

* The appointed board should be **required** to have a borough resident on the committee.

I would like this email to become part of public hearing comments for HB 347. Please confirm if this is possible.

I'm interested in your feedback and am available to discuss our case. I know that there isn't much time and I apologize for the late hour of my email. I work 8-5 but check my email frequently. My cell is listed below. Thank you for taking the time to consider our case and thoughts regarding HB 347.

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