BEFORE THE TENNESSEE STATE BOARD OF EQUALIZATION

IN RE:	James H. Stack Dist. 4, Map 3, Control Map 3, Parcel 4.07 Residential Property Tax Year 2007	)) Cheatham County))

INITIAL DECISION AND ORDER

Statement of the Case

The subject property is presently valued as follows:

LAND VALUE	IMPROVEMENT VALUE	TOTAL VALUE	ASSESSMENT
$57,500	$ -0-	$57,500	$14,375

An appeal has been filed on behalf of the property owner with the State Board of Equalization. The undersigned administrative judge conducted a hearing in this matter on October 17, 2007 in Ashland City, Tennessee. In attendance at the hearing were James Stack, the appellant, and Betty Balthrop, Cheatham County Assessor of Property.

FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Subject property consists of an unimproved 5.01 acre tract located on Highway 41-A in Pleasant View, Tennessee. Subject tract has 204 feet of road frontage and a depth of 1,018 feet.

The taxpayer contended that subject property should be valued at $35,000. In support of this position, the taxpayer argued that the 2007 countywide reappraisal caused the appraisal of subject tract to increase excessively. The taxpayer maintained that subject property experiences a loss in value because it is often wet and lacks public water. Mr. Stack testified that he was unsure if subject land will percolate.

Subject property was originally part of a larger parcel owned by Mr. Stack's grandfather. Following his death, Mr. Stack purchased the parcel in question for $25,000 on February 12, 1999. Mr. Stack stated that he believed he paid a premium for the property.

The assessor contended that subject property should be valued at $57,500. In support of this position, Ms. Balthrop testified that the only sales in the area occurred in 1999 when the land owned by Mr. Stack's grandfather was subdivided. Ms. Balthrop asserted that those sales support the current appraisal of subject tract considering the amount land has appreciated between 1999 and January 1, 2007, the relevant assessment date pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 67-5-504(a).

The basis of valuation as stated in Tennessee Code Annotated Section 67-5-601(a) is that "[t]he value of all property shall be ascertained from the evidence of its sound, intrinsic

and immediate value, for purposes of sale between a willing seller and a willing buyer without consideration of speculative values . . ."

After having reviewed all the evidence in the case, the administrative judge finds that the subject property should remain valued at $57,500 based upon the presumption of correctness attaching to the decision of the Cheatham County Board of Equalization.

Since the taxpayer is appealing from the determination of the Cheatham County Board of Equalization, the burden of proof is on the taxpayer. See State Board of Equalization Rule 0600-1-.11(1) and *Big Fork Mining Company v. Tennessee Water Quality Control Board*, 620 S.W.2d 515 (Tenn. App. 1981).

The administrative judge finds that the fair market value of subject property as of January 1, 2007 constitutes the relevant issue. The administrative judge finds that the Assessment Appeals Commission has repeatedly rejected arguments based upon the amount by which an appraisal has increased as a consequence of reappraisal. For example, the Commission rejected such an argument in *E.B. Kissell, Jr.* (Shelby County, Tax Years 1991 and 1992) reasoning in pertinent part as follows:

> The rate of increase in the assessment of the subject property since the last reappraisal or even last year may be alarming but is not evidence that the value is wrong. It is conceivable that values may change dramatically for some properties, even over so short of time as a year. . .

Final Decision and Order at 2.

The administrative judge finds merely reciting factors that could cause a dimunition in value does not establish the current appraisal exceeds market value. The administrative judge finds the Assessment Appeals Commission has ruled on numerous occasions that one must *quantify* the loss in value one contends has not been adequately considered. See, e.g., *Fred & Ann Ruth Honeycutt* (Carter Co., Tax Year 1995) wherein the Assessment Appeals Commission ruled that the taxpayer introduced insufficient evidence to quantify the loss in value from the stigma associated with a gasoline spill. The Commission stated in pertinent part as follows:

> The assessor conceded that the gasoline spill affected the value of the property, but he asserted that his valuation already reflects a deduction of 15% for the effects of the spill. . . . The administrative judge rejected Mr. Honeycutt's claim for an additional reduction in the taxable value, noting that he had not produced evidence by which to quantify the effect of the "stigma." The Commission finds itself in the same position. . . . Conceding that the marketability of a property may be affected by contamination of a neighboring property, we must have proof that allows us to quantify the loss in value, such as sales of comparable properties. . . Absent this proof here we must accept as sufficient, the assessor's attempts to reflect environmental condition in the present value of the property.

Final Decision and Order at 1-2. Similarly, in *Kenneth R. and Rebecca L. Adams* (Shelby Co., Tax Year 1998) the Commission ruled in relevant part as follows:

> The taxpayer also claimed that the land value set by the assessing authorities. . .was too high. In support of that position, she claimed that. . .the use of surrounding property detracted from the value of their property. . . . As to the assertion the use of properties has a detrimental effect on the value of the subject property, that assertion, without some valid method of quantifying the same, is meaningless.

Final Decision and Order at 2.

ORDER

It is therefore ORDERED that the following value and assessment be adopted for tax year 2007:

LAND VALUE	IMPROVEMENT VALUE	TOTAL VALUE	ASSESSMENT
$57,500	$ -0-	$57,500	$14,375

It is FURTHER ORDERED that any applicable hearing costs be assessed pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 67-5-1501(d) and State Board of Equalization Rule 0600-1-.17.

Pursuant to the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act, Tenn. Code Ann. §§ 4-5-301—325, Tenn. Code Ann. § 67-5-1501, and the Rules of Contested Case Procedure of the State Board of Equalization, the parties are advised of the following remedies:

1. A party may appeal this decision and order to the Assessment Appeals Commission pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 67-5-1501 and Rule 0600-1-.12 of the Contested Case Procedures of the State Board of Equalization. Tennessee Code Annotated § 67-5-1501(c) provides that an appeal **"must be filed within thirty (30) days from the date the initial decision is sent."** Rule 0600-1-.12 of the Contested Case Procedures of the State Board of Equalization provides that the appeal be filed with the Executive Secretary of the State Board and that the appeal **"identify the allegedly erroneous finding(s) of fact and/or conclusion(s) of law in the initial order"**; or
2. A party may petition for reconsideration of this decision and order pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 4-5-317 within fifteen (15) days of the entry of the order. The petition for reconsideration must state the specific grounds upon which relief is requested. The filing of a petition for reconsideration is not a prerequisite for seeking administrative or judicial review; or
3. A party may petition for a stay of effectiveness of this decision and order pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 4-5-316 within seven (7) days of the entry of the order.

This order does not become final until an official certificate is issued by the Assessment Appeals Commission. Official certificates are normally issued seventy-five (75) days after the entry of the initial decision and order if no party has appealed.

ENTERED this 31st day of October, 2007.

MARK J. MINSKY
ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE
TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF STATE
ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES DIVISION

c: Mr. James H. Stack
Betty G. Balthrop, Assessor of Property