

**Real Property Tax Appeals Commission  
Minutes of the Public Meeting held on  
Wednesday, September 17, 2014**

Chairperson Gregory Syphax called to order the Commission's fourth public meeting for 2014 on September 17, 2014, at 4:38 p.m. in Hearing Room 1 in the Commission's suite of offices located at 441 4<sup>th</sup> Street NW. The quorum consisted of Gregory Syphax, Richard Amato, May Chan, Alvin Jackson, Cliftine Jones, Hillary Lovick, Neil Ollivierra, Frank Sanders, James "Skip" Walker, Sean Warfield, and Trent Williams. Karla Christensen, and Don Isaac, Jr., were absent from the meeting. Executive Director, Carlynn Fuller, Debra Spencer, Sophia Murray and Judith Brightwell were also in attendance.

Mr. Syphax began the meeting by introducing the members of the Commission and staff and sharing their brief bio's. He stated that over the summer the Commissioner have been taking training classes both in-house (Hotel Appraisal Practices) and online (Income Approach, Cost Approach, Appraising Odd Ball Properties, and, Assisted Living Properties)

Mr. Syphax shared the OTR has implemented a new methodology for appraising properties. OTR has informed him that the number of 1<sup>st</sup> level appeals have exceeded their expectations and so the Commission's caseload is likely to be higher. He indicated that File and ServeXpress was not mandatory this year but will be next year.

In terms of outreach he will be sending out brochures to the ANCs to give to their constituents. He has also filmed a Public Service Announcement with the Office of Cable Television that will be shown starting in February 2015 to explain to the public how to appeal their property tax assessment.

The Commissioners will do a better job this year of keeping the hearings within the 30 minute time frames. Petitioners need to come in ready to make their case. Broad brush presentations must be in writing.

Mr. Amato discussed a complicated case that was decided by DC Court of Appeals dealing with Possessory Interest. It is significant to the Commission because the Court ruled that the Commission has no authority to rule on legal issues of the right to a tax exemption; the Commission does have authority to rule on value and classification. Mr. Amato stated that this is a highly significant opinion. Mr. Syphax indicated that every Commissioner that is assigned to hear a Possessory Interest case must read the opinion.

Carlynn Fuller reported that the 2014 Annual Report was due to Council on October 1<sup>st</sup>. She also indicated that letters regarding training for electronic filing using File and ServeXpress have been sent to over three thousand property owners.

Mr. Syphax asked if the public had any comments. There was 7 members from the public in attendance; Michael Owen and Steven Bishop from Ryan; Phil Applebaum and Matt Canter from Marvin Poer; Scott Cryder, Stuart Turow and David Fuss from Wilkes Artis.

Mr. Turow indicated that he does not have a problem with OTR's new approach as it pertained to stabilized property but does have a problem as it pertains to un-stabilized properties being treated the same as stabilized properties. Mr. Syphax responded and indicated that OTR has stated that it has taken other factors into consideration as it relates to un-stabilized properties; however, he made it clear that he was not vouching for OTR. Mr. Cryder also voiced his concerns about OTR's new methodology. Mr. Syphax indicated that a "wait and see" approach was in order.

Mr. Fuss requested that the website be changed in order to make decisions searchable by square and lot and the issue of how to deal with confidential information was discussed. Mr. Turow suggested two ways to handle the confidentiality issue – post the decision and not the narrative; or post the narrative and redact the confidential information. The decision spreadsheet that is posted is currently searchable.

Mr. Syphax thanked everyone for coming and adjourned the meeting at 5:30 p.m.