

**Board of Civil Authority
Tax Appeal Decision
SPAN – 384-119-11961**

To: Brian & Heidi Crane
From: Board of Civil Authority
Date: October 12, 2021

This is the decision, with reasons, of the Board of Civil Authority of the Town of Mendon, after hearing and evidence, in an appeal brought by you on your property at 392 Eastridge Circle.

1. We find that Brian & Heidi Crane are the owners of a .34-acre lot and a house at 392 Eastridge Circle, Mendon, Vermont. The house contains a large kitchen, mudroom, living room, wide glassed in sunroom, dining room, office, playroom, five bedrooms, laundry room, and three bathrooms. The unfinished basement has storage space. Attached to the sunroom is a large deck and pool. The lot itself is level and landscaped with bushes and gardens.
2. Although the listers valued the property using a cost approach, based on the availability of closely comparable properties, we find the market sales approach the most reliable methodology for purposes of this appeal.
3. The subject property was last sold seven years ago for \$250,000. We find this sale too remote in time to the appraisal date of April 1, 2021 and do not ascribe any significance to the sale value.
4. The Assessor appraised the property at a value of \$438,300 for the 2021 Grand List. The Cranes grieved within the proper time and the Assessor did not change the appraisal on the basis of the grievance. Mr. & Mrs. Crane appealed to this Board on July 07, and the Board heard their appeal on August 31, at 5:45 p.m. in the town office. An inspection committee of Rich Carlson, Ann Singiser, and Al Wakefield visited the property on September 17. A copy of their report is attached to this decision.
5. In support of the appraised value of \$438,300, the Assessor presented two properties – The Lantz and Garland properties that we find to be comparable to the Crane property. In support of an appraised value of \$312,459, the appellants presented sales from 258 Round Robin Road, 785 Journeys End, both in Mendon and 726 Colonial Drive in Rutland Town, as well as some pages from an appraisal done on September 29, 2019.

The property of Stephen Lantz is located at 90 Beechwood Farm Road. The land is approximately 3 acres larger, and the home is approximately 1200 square feet smaller, but of slightly higher quality. This property sold for \$450,000 in November 2020. The property of Daniel Garland is located at 243 Sherwood Drive. The property sold for \$440,000 in October 2020.

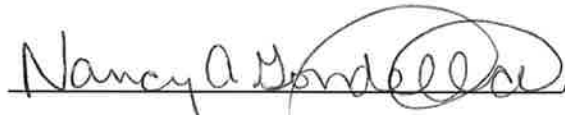
The property located at 258 Round Robin Road, built in 2004 and of a higher quality, sold in May 2021 for \$482,000. The property located at 785 Journeys End is much larger (by about 2600

square feet) and sold for \$442,500 in January 2021. The property located at 726 Colonial Drive in Rutland Town (about 1300 square feet larger) sold in February 2021 for \$450,000. The property appraisal done in 2019, in a very different housing market, valued the subject property at \$276,000.

6. Based on the comparables, and site inspection, we find the fair market value of the subject property is \$405,000

The appellants have a right to appeal this decision to the Director of Property Valuation and Review of the Superior Court of Rutland County by filing a written notice of appeal within 30 days after the mailing of the notice by the town clerk. The fee for the appeal to the Director is \$70; the fee for an appeal to the Court is \$250. Checks should be made payable to the appropriate agency and returned to the Town Clerk with a letter stating the intent to appeal.

I hereby certify that this a true record of the action taken on this appeal by the Board of Civil Authority of the Town of Mendon.


Nancy A. Gondelle, Chair
Board of Civil Authority

Filed in the Town Clerk's office on October 12, 2021 at 10:45 am.

To be recorded in the Grand List Book of April 1, 2021.

Attest: 

REPORT OF INSPECTION COMMITTEE

To: Board of Civil Authority
Mendon, VT
From: Rich Carlson, Al Wakefield, Ann Singiser; Inspection Committee
Re: Inspection of Crane Property located at 392 Eastridge Circle

We conducted an inspection of the property owned Brian and Heidi Crane located at 392 Eastridge Circle on Friday, September 17th at 1:30 p.m. Heidi Crane accompanied us on a tour of the exterior and interior of the property.

The house built in 1981 sits on a .34-acre lot in the attractive development of Eastridge Acres and is of a contemporary design. The lot is level and landscaped with bushes and gardens.

The house consists of 2906 square feet and has an attached two-car garage. Upon entering the door which is between the garage and house there is a mudroom leading to the living room with wood floors and a pellet stove. Outside the living room is a wide glassed-in porch or sunroom running along the width of the house with no heat and a stone/brick floor. There is a large kitchen with a double sink and stainless appliances, a dining room off the kitchen, an office /den with a propane stove and built-in shelves and cabinets, a bedroom and ¾ bath. There are two sets of stairs to the second floor. Outside the sunroom is an attached large deck and pool.

Upstairs are a bedroom/playroom, four other bedrooms, two full baths, and a laundry room. All rooms have closets and are carpeted. Overall, the house was average in terms of upkeep and maintenance, needing some exterior painting and in some of the rooms.

The unfinished basement has storage space, an electric hot water heater, and a York propane furnace.

The assessment under appeal is \$438,300. The assessor presented two comparables, both with considerably larger land size but with less square footage. Comp. 1 at 90 Beechwood Farm Road has 3.40 acres and 1751 square feet and Comp. 2 at 243 Sherwood Drive has 4.20 acres and 1995 square feet. Comp. 1 sold on 11/20/20 for \$450,000 and Comp.2 sold on 10/26/20 for \$440,000.

Considering properties presented by the appellant, two reflected no recent sales (350 Eastridge Circle and 1330 Brookwood). 144 Brookwood sold on 11/22/19, a year and a half ago, for \$305,000 with 1.06 acres and 2584 square feet, with one less bedroom, one less bath, no pool, and lesser quality. 258 Round Robin Road sold on May 24, 2021 for \$482,000 with 1.0 acre and 3080 square feet, more land and approximately the same square footage.. The appellant also considered a sale on Journey's End on 1/29/21 for \$442,500, but we did not factor that into our recommendation as full Record Card information was not presented.

In looking at all the above information, the Inspection Committee suggests lowering the assessment to \$405,000.







BCA Hearing Crane

Date: 08/31/2021

Hearing time: 5:45 p.m.

Present: Betsy Reddy, Jim Reddy, Dick Wilcox, Lindsey MacCuaig, Ann Singiser, Larry Courcelle, Marie Conway, Al Wakefield – BCA members, Spencer Potter – assessor, Nancy Gondella – Chair/Town Clerk, Jesse Bridge – Secretary/Assistant Town Clerk, Heidi Crane - Appellant

Call to Order: Nancy called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

Appellant Info: Brian and Heidi Crane, 392 Eastridge Circle, 08-01-18.000
Spencer Potter and appellant are sworn in. Nancy asked if anyone needs to excuse themselves from the hearing due to conflicts of interest or ex parte communication, no one does but Rich said he is a neighbor of Heidi's but feels he can be fair and Heidi is ok with that.

Case Introduction: Spencer handed out the lister card and introduced the subject property as a single-family residence at 392 Eastridge Circle, 0.34 acres, assessed at \$438,300 (marked Crane T-1).

Appellant Testimony: Nancy handed out an exhibit (marked Crane A-1). She said it would have been helpful to know how Spencer came to the assessment beforehand. She believes her house is disproportionately assessed. She said it increased by almost double at 68%. She understands the housing market is crazy. She said she looked at other houses in the area and most of them went up an average of 30%. She looked at other houses in her neighborhood the highest increase other than hers was 47% and the lowest 19%. She said she looked at comparables, the first is 350 Eastridge Circle. It has the same square footage, one less bedroom and one less bathroom, it has a little more land and is assessed at \$80,000 less than hers. She said that seemed like a lot for a bedroom. The second comparable is 144 Brookwood which sold in 2019 and they refinanced their house around the same time as that sold and were appraised at \$276,000. In the appraisal (which is included in the packet) 144 Brookwood was used as a comparable. It has one less bathroom and one less bedroom, similar sf and built around the same time as hers. It sold for \$300,000 and now is assessed at \$349,600 which is \$90,000 less than hers. The third comparable is 130 Brookwood which has more square footage than her house. It has 5 bedrooms and 4 full bathrooms and is assessed at almost \$50,000 less than hers. It also has a lower effective age than her house. The fourth comparable is 258 Round Robin Road which has more square footage, 6 bedrooms, 4 full baths and more land than her property. It is also across from Pico with views and was built in 2004, which is 23 years newer than hers. It is assessed at \$430,100. On the property card it said Zillow had it listed at \$469,000, it sold in May 2021 for \$482,000 which is close to what Zillow had it at. Her house was listed on Zillow in June 2021 for \$312,459. The fifth comparable is 785 Journeys End which sold in January 2021 for \$442,500, it has 5644 sf, 6 bedrooms, 5 bathrooms. Zillow listed it at \$467,000 which, again, is close to what it sold for. The last

comparable is 726 Colonial Drive, 4200 sf, 5 bedrooms, 6 bathrooms, 1.5 acres, which is 1300 more sf than hers, and two more bathrooms sold in February 2021 for \$450,000, only \$12,000 more than her assessment. She said her bathrooms need to be updated.

Evidence Presented: Crane A-1

Assessor's Response: none

BCA Questions: Betsy asked if she still had the in-ground pool with a fence around it. Heidi said yes, it's small and a weird shape.

Assessor's Testimony: Spencer presented two sales. The first one is at 90 Beechwood Farm, a single-family residence on 3.4 acres sold in November 2020 for \$450,000 (marked Crane T-2). The second is 243 Sherwood Dr., single family residence on 4.2 acres, sold in October 2020 sold for \$440,000 (marked Crane T-3).

Evidence Presented: Crane T-2, Crane T-3

BCA Questions: Rich said that being a resident of the same area the majority of the homes are ranches and colonial. The Crane structure is contemporary, does impact the market value? Spencer said if the style is acceptable to this market, whether its colonial or contemporary, in his opinion they carry equal weight. If you have a house that was well built but looked like it belonged in San Diego, it may be a high-quality home but this area doesn't want this style. Spencer said in the appraisal Heidi submitted there is a functional utility line, that's where the style of the home would come in. The appraiser that did the appraisal listed hers as average as well as the comparables and therefore did not feel there was any design problem with the marketability of her house. Rich asked how a pool adds to the market value. Spencer said in his opinion a pool does add some value, nowhere near the cost of the pool itself but it does add some value, around \$7-8 thousand.

Appellant response: Heidi said she believes that her home is less desirable in this market, it was on the market for 2 years before she bought it. Heidi said both comparables have a lot more land, the quality on both is 5, hers is 4. The first house was built in 2001 and second in 2004 so both are newer.

Follow up: Betsy asked if there were any updates done. Heidi said they had to remove all the glass from the sunroom because it was leaking and had it replaced with a roof with sun lights.

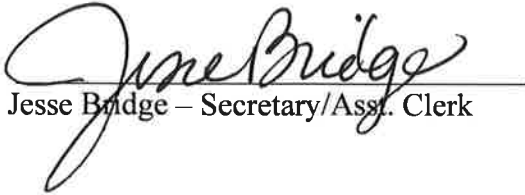
Inspection Committee Members: Rich, Al, Ann

Date of Inspection: Friday September 17, 2021 at 1:30pm

There being no further business, the hearing was recessed at 6:05 p.m. and will reconvene on September 30, 2021 at 5:30p.m.

Inspection Report: The hearing reconvened at 5:15pm on September 30, 2021. Present at the hearing were Dick Wilcox, Ann Singiser, Larry Courcelle, Al Wakefield, Rich Carlson – BCA members, Nancy Gondella – Chair/Town Clerk, Jesse Bridge, Secretary/Assistant Town Clerk, Heidi Crane – Appellant. Rich read the report which is attached to these minutes.

Discussion: Heidi made the correction that the address is 392 Eastridge Circle. There was no further discussion and the hearing was adjourned at 5:25p.m.


Jesse Bridge – Secretary/Asst. Clerk


Nancy Gondella – Chair/Town Clerk