

BEFORE THE NEBRASKA TAX EQUALIZATION AND REVIEW COMMISSION

Lougell/Francis Goranson Trust, Kenneth L.
Wilson, Trustee,
Appellant,

v.

Douglas County Board of Equalization,
Appellee.

Case Nos: 14C 446, 14C 447, 14C 448 &
14C 449

Decision and Order Affirming the
County Board of Equalization

Background

1. The Subject Property in Case No. 14C-446 is improved with a 2,973 sq. ft. mixed retail store w/ residential units, with a legal description of: Mc Cormicks 2nd Add Lot 9 Block 8 W 46.5 Ft. 46.5 x 127.25, Omaha, Douglas County, Nebraska.
2. The Subject Property in Case No. 14C-447 is improved with a 3,018 sq. ft. retail store and a 1,166 sq. ft. single family dwelling, with a legal description of: Mc Cormicks 2nd Add Lot 10 Block 8 E 3 ½ Ft Lt 9 & W 39 Ft., Omaha, Douglas County, Nebraska
3. The Subject Property in Case No. 14C-448 is improved with a 1480 sq. ft. retail store and a 944 sq. ft. single family dwelling, with a legal description of: Mc Cormicks 2nd Add Lot 15 Block 8, Omaha, Douglas County, Nebraska.
4. The Subject Property in Case No. 14C-449 is improved with a 2,600 sq. ft. retail store, with a legal description of: Mc Cormicks 2nd Add Lot 16 Block 8, Omaha, Douglas County, Nebraska.
5. The Douglas County Assessor (the County Assessor) assessed the Subject Property in Case No. 14C-446 at \$144,000 for tax year 2014.
6. The Taxpayer protested this value to the Douglas County Board of Equalization (the County Board) and requested an assessed value of \$115,700 for tax year 2014.
7. The County Board determined that the taxable value of the Subject Property in Case No. 14C-446 was \$144,000 for tax year 2014.
8. The Douglas County Assessor (the County Assessor) assessed the Subject Property in Case No. 14C-447 at \$253,600 for tax year 2014.
9. The Taxpayer protested this value to the Douglas County Board of Equalization (the County Board) and requested an assessed value of \$117,600 for tax year 2014.
10. The County Board determined that the taxable value of the Subject Property in Case No. 14C-447 was \$253,600 for tax year 2014.
11. The Douglas County Assessor (the County Assessor) assessed the Subject Property in Case No. 14C-448 at \$153,200 for tax year 2014.
12. The Taxpayer protested this value to the Douglas County Board of Equalization (the County Board) and requested an assessed value of \$102,100 for tax year 2014.

13. The County Board determined that the taxable value of the Subject Property in Case No. 14C-448 was \$153,200 for tax year 2014.
14. The Douglas County Assessor (the County Assessor) assessed the Subject Property in Case No. 14C-449 at \$175,500 for tax year 2014.
15. The Taxpayer protested this value to the Douglas County Board of Equalization (the County Board) and requested an assessed value of \$97,200 for tax year 2014.
16. The County Board determined that the taxable value of the Subject Property in Case No. 14C-446 was \$175,500 for tax year 2014.
17. The Taxpayer appealed the determinations of the County Board to the Tax Equalization and Review Commission (the Commission).
18. A Single Commissioner hearing was held on September 20, 2016, at the Omaha State Office Building, 1313 Farnam, Room F, Omaha, Nebraska, before Commissioner Steven A. Keetle.
19. Monty Bowman was present at the hearing for the Lougell/Francis Goranson Trust, Kenneth L. Wilson, Trustee (Taxpayer).
20. Linda Rowe of the Douglas County Assessor/Register of Deeds office was present for the County Board.

Applicable Law

21. All real property in Nebraska subject to taxation shall be assessed as of the effective date of January 1.¹
22. The Commission's review of the determination of the County Board of Equalization is de novo.²
23. When considering an appeal a presumption exists that the "board of equalization has faithfully performed its official duties in making an assessment and has acted upon sufficient competent evidence to justify its action."³ That presumption "remains until there is competent evidence to the contrary presented, and the presumption disappears when there is competent evidence adduced on appeal to the contrary. From that point forward, the reasonableness of the valuation fixed by the board of equalization becomes one of fact based upon all the evidence presented. The burden of showing such valuation to be unreasonable rests upon the taxpayer on appeal from the action of the board."⁴

¹ See, Neb. Rev. Stat. §77-1301(1) (Reissue 2009).

² See, Neb. Rev. Stat. §77-5016(8) (2014 Cum. Supp.), *Brenner v. Banner Cty. Bd. of Equal.*, 276 Neb. 275, 286, 753 N.W.2d 802, 813 (2008). "When an appeal is conducted as a 'trial de novo,' as opposed to a 'trial de novo on the record,' it means literally a new hearing and not merely new findings of fact based upon a previous record. A trial de novo is conducted as though the earlier trial had not been held in the first place, and evidence is taken anew as such evidence is available at the time of the trial on appeal." *Koch v. Cedar Cty. Freeholder Bd.*, 276 Neb. 1009, 1019 (2009).

³ *Brenner v. Banner Cty. Bd. Of Equal.*, 276 Neb. 275, 283, 753 N.W.2d 802, 811 (2008) (Citations omitted).

⁴ *Id.*

24. The order, decision, determination or action appealed from shall be affirmed unless evidence is adduced establishing that the order, decision, determination, or action was unreasonable or arbitrary.⁵
25. Proof that the order, decision, determination, or action was unreasonable or arbitrary must be made by clear and convincing evidence.⁶
26. A Taxpayer must introduce competent evidence of actual value of the Subject Property in order to successfully claim that the Subject Property is overvalued.⁷
27. The Commission's Decision and Order shall include findings of fact and conclusions of law.⁸

Findings of Fact & Conclusions of Law

28. The Taxpayer's representative alleged that the Taxpayer did not receive a fair hearing at the County Board level.
29. The Taxpayer's representative did not present evidence to demonstrate that the Taxpayer did not receive a fair hearing at the County Board level.
30. The Taxpayer's representative alleged that the County Board made an offer to Confess Judgment that "never went through."
31. "The offer [to confess judgment] shall not be deemed to be an admission of the cause of action or relief to which the appellant is entitled, and the offer shall not be given in evidence at the hearing."⁹
32. The Taxpayer's representative alleged that the Subject Properties were overvalued for tax year 2014.
33. The Taxpayer's representative presented no evidence that the Subject Properties were overvalued for tax year 2014.
34. The Taxpayer's representative presented no evidence of value for the Subject Properties.
35. The Taxpayer has not produced competent evidence that the County Board failed to faithfully perform its duties and to act on sufficient competent evidence to justify its actions.
36. The Taxpayer has not adduced clear and convincing evidence that the determinations of the County Board are arbitrary or unreasonable and the decisions of the County Board should be affirmed.

ORDER

⁵ Neb. Rev. Stat. §77-5016(9) (2014 Cum. Supp.).

⁶ *Omaha Country Club v. Douglas Cty. Bd. of Equal.*, 11 Neb. App. 171, 645 N.W.2d 821 (2002).

⁷ Cf. *Josten-Wilbert Vault Co. v. Board of Equalization for Buffalo County*, 179 Neb. 415, 138 N.W.2d 641 (1965) (determination of actual value); *Lincoln Tel. and Tel. Co. v. County Bd. Of Equalization of York County*, 209 Neb. 465, 308 N.W.2d 515 (1981)(determination of equalized taxable value).

⁸ Neb. Rev. Stat. §77-5018(1) (2014 Cum. Supp.).

⁹ Neb. Rev. Stat. §77-1510.01 (Reissue 2009).

IT IS ORDERED THAT:

1. The Decision of the County Board of Equalization determining the taxable value of the Subject Property for tax year 2014, is Affirmed.
2. The taxable value of the Subject Property in Case No. 14C-446 for tax year 2014 is:

Land	\$ 20,700
<u>Improvements</u>	<u>\$123,300</u>
Total	\$144,000

3. The taxable value of the Subject Property in Case No. 14C-447 for tax year 2014 is:

Land	\$ 18,900
<u>Improvements</u>	<u>\$234,700</u>
Total	\$253,600

4. The taxable value of the Subject Property in Case No. 14C-448 for tax year 2014 is:

Land	\$ 22,200
<u>Improvements</u>	<u>\$131,000</u>
Total	\$153,200

5. The taxable value of the Subject Property in Case No. 14C-449 for tax year 2014 is:

Land	\$ 22,300
<u>Improvements</u>	<u>\$153,200</u>
Total	\$175,500

6. This Decision and Order, if no further action is taken, shall be certified to the Douglas County Treasurer and the Douglas County Assessor, pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. §77-5018 (2014 Cum. Supp.).
7. Any request for relief, by any party, which is not specifically provided for by this Decision and Order is denied.
8. Each Party is to bear its own costs in this proceeding.
9. This Decision and Order shall only be applicable to tax year 2014.
10. This Decision and Order is effective on November 10, 2016.

Signed and Sealed: November 10, 2016

Steven A. Keetle, Commissioner