

**NEBRASKA TAX EQUALIZATION  
AND REVIEW COMMISSION**

RON L. BICKFORD,	)	
	)	
Appellant,	)	CASE NO 05R-182
	)	
v.	)	DECISION AND ORDER AFFIRMING
	)	THE DECISION OF THE HALL
HALL COUNTY BOARD OF	)	COUNTY BOARD OF EQUALIZATION
EQUALIZATION,	)	
	)	
Appellee.	)	
	)	

The above-captioned case was called for a hearing on the merits of an appeal by Ron L. Bickford to the Tax Equalization and Review Commission ("the Commission"). The hearing was held in the meeting room of the Holiday Inn Express, Kearney, Buffalo, County, Nebraska, on May 31, 2006, pursuant to a Notice and Order for Hearing issued February 10, 2006. Commissioners Wickersham, Warnes, Lore, and Hans were present. Commissioner Wickersham presided at the hearing.

Ron L. Bickford, ("the Taxpayer") was present at the hearing without legal counsel.

The Hall County Board of Equalization ("the County Board") appeared through legal counsel, Michelle J. Oldham, a Deputy County Attorney for Hall County, Nebraska.

The Commission took statutory notice, received exhibits and heard testimony.

The Commission is required by Neb. Rev. Stat. §77-5018 (Supp. 2005) to state its final decision and order concerning an appeal, with findings of fact and conclusions of law, on the record or in writing. The final decision and order of the Commission in this case is as follows.

**I.  
FINDINGS**

The Commission finds and determines that:

1. The Taxpayer is the owner of record of certain real property described as Lot 10, Sunset Fifth Addition, Grand Island, Hall County, Nebraska, ("the subject property").
2. Taxable value of the subject property placed on the assessment roll as of January 1, 2005, ("the assessment date") by the Hall County Assessor, value as proposed by the Taxpayer in a timely protest, and taxable value as determined by the County Board is shown in the following table:

Description: Lot 10, Sunset Fifth Addition, Grand Island, Hall County, Nebraska.

	Assessor Notice Value	Taxpayer Protest Value	Board Determined Value
Land	\$ 24,740.00	\$ 22,591.00	\$ 24,740.00
Improvement	\$ 90,204.00	\$ 76,063.00	\$ 90,204.00
Total	\$114,944.00	\$ 98,654.00	\$114,944.00

3. The Taxpayer timely filed an appeal of the County Board's decision to the Commission.
4. The County Board was served with a Notice in Lieu of Summons and duly answered that Notice.
5. An Order for Hearing and Notice of Hearing issued on February 10, 2006, set a hearing of the Taxpayer's appeal for May 31, 2006, at 2:00 p.m. CDST.
6. An Affidavit of Service which appears in the records of the Commission establishes that a copy of the Order for Hearing and Notice of Hearing was served on all parties.

7. For reasons stated below, the Taxpayer has not adduced sufficient, clear and convincing evidence that the decision of the County Board is unreasonable or arbitrary, and the decision of the County Board should be affirmed.

8. Taxable value of the subject property for the tax year 2005 is:

Land value	\$ 24,740.00
Improvement value	<u>\$ 90,204.00</u>
Total value	<u>\$114,944.00.</u>

## II. CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. Subject matter jurisdiction of the Commission in this appeal is over all issues raised during the county board of equalization proceedings. *Arcadian Fertilizer, L.P. v. Sarpy County Bd. of Equalization*, 7 Neb.App. 655, 584 N.W.2d 353, (1998)
2. The Commission has jurisdiction over the parties to this appeal.
3. “Actual value is the most probable price expressed in terms of money that a property will bring if exposed for sale in the open market, or in an arm’s length transaction, between a willing buyer and a willing seller, both of whom are knowledgeable concerning all the uses to which the real property is adapted and for which the real property is capable of being used. In analyzing the uses and restrictions applicable to real property the analysis shall include a full description of the physical characteristics of the real property and an identification of the property rights valued.” Neb. Rev. Stat. §77-112 (Reissue 2003).

4. Actual value may be determined using professionally accepted mass appraisal methods, including, but not limited to, the (1) sales comparison approach using the guidelines in section 77-1371, (2) income approach, and (3) cost approach. Neb. Rev. Stat. §77-112 (Reissue 2003).
5. Use of all of the statutory factors for determination of actual value is not required. All that is required is use of the applicable factors. *First National Bank & Trust of Syracuse v. Otoe Cty.*, 233 Neb. 412, 445 N.W.2d 880 (1989).
6. “Actual value, market value, and fair market value mean exactly the same thing.” *Omaha Country Club v. Douglas County Board of Equalization, et al.*, 11 Neb.App. 171, 180, 645 N.W.2d 821, 829 (2002).
7. Taxable value is the percentage of actual value subject to taxation as directed by section 77-201 of Nebraska Statutes and has the same meaning as assessed value. Neb. Rev. Stat. §77-131 (Reissue 2003).
8. All taxable real property, with the exception of qualified agricultural land and horticultural land, shall be valued at actual value for purposes of taxation. Neb. Rev. Stat. §77-201(1) (Cum. Supp. 2004).
9. The Taxpayer must establish by clear and convincing evidence that the action of the County Board was unreasonable or arbitrary. Neb. Rev. Stat. §77-5016 (7) (Supp. 2005) *Garvey Elevators, Inc. v. Adams County Board of Equalization*, 261 Neb. 130, 621 N.W.2d, 523, (2001).

10. "Clear and convincing evidence means and is that amount of evidence which produces in the trier of fact a firm belief or conviction about the existence of a fact to be proved."  
*Castellano v. Bitkower*, 216 Neb. 806, 812, 346 N.W.2d 249, 253 (1984).
11. A decision is "arbitrary" when it is made in disregard of the facts and circumstances and without some basis which could lead a reasonable person to the same conclusion. *Phelps Cty. Bd. of Equal. v. Graf*, 258 Neb 810, 606 N.W.2d 736, (2000).
12. A decision is unreasonable only if the evidence presented leaves no room for differences of opinion among reasonable minds. *Pittman v. Sarpy Cty. Bd. of Equal.*, 258 Neb 390, 603 N.W.2d 447, (1999).
13. "An owner who is familiar with his property and knows its worth is permitted to testify as to its value." *U. S. Ecology v. Boyd County Bd. Of Equalization*, 256 Neb. 7, 16, 588 N.W.2d 575, 581, (1999).

### **III. DISCUSSION**

The property is a residential parcel. The parcel is a corner lot abutting a busy street in Grand Island near a high school. The residence on the lot was constructed by the Taxpayer in 1968. The residence is a single family ranch style dwelling with an attached two car garage. The residence has 1,367 square feet of above ground living space containing 3 bedrooms and 1½ baths. The residence has not been updated or remodeled since its construction and has had some maintenance required. The Taxpayer testified that the quality of construction and the condition of the residence as determined by the Assessor were correct. A 12 x 10 foot shed on the property is not listed as an improvement by the Assessor.

The Taxpayer testified that in his opinion the actual value of the subject property as of the assessment date was \$98,654.00 and that he had arrived at that number based on a calculation of an appropriate cost per square foot but was not sure how he arrived at the appropriate cost per square foot. The Taxpayer did not recall the information used to calculate a square foot cost.

The County Board provided information concerning various sales of real estate it considered comparable to the subject property. Various differences appear between the subject property and the comparables offered by the County Board. One comparable offered by the County Board is across the street from the subject property and three doors to the west. (E5). That property is improved with a single family ranch style residence constructed in 1966. (E12:2) The quality and condition are the same as those determined for the subject property. The comparable has three bedrooms and one bath. The attached two car garage is slightly smaller than the attached two car garage of the subject property. The comparable has a 1,242 square foot basement with 621 square feet of minimum finish. (E12:2). The subject property has 1,367 square feet of basement with 1,015 square feet of which has minimum finish. (E2:3). The comparable sold in 2003 for \$125,900.00. (E12:1). The Taxpayer testified that the real estate market for the neighborhood in which the subject property is located has been rising since 2003. While the sale of one residence with some differences from the subject is not a conclusive indicator of value three other comparables offered the by the County Board support its determination.

The Commission cannot determine that the decision of the County Board was unreasonable or arbitrary.

**V.  
ORDER**

**IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED THAT:**

1. The decision of the County Board determining taxable value of the subject property as of the assessment date, January 1, 2005, is affirmed.

2. Taxable value of the subject property for the tax year 2005 is:

Land value           \$ 24,740.00

Improvement value \$ 90,204.00

Total value           \$114,944.00.

3. This decision, if no appeal is timely filed, shall be certified to the Hall County Treasurer, and the Hall County Assessor, pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. §77-5018 (Supp. 2005).

4. Any request for relief, by any party, which is not specifically provided for by this order is denied.

5. Each party is to bear its own costs in this proceeding.

6. This decision shall only be applicable to tax year 2005.

7. This order is effective for purposes of appeal June 7, 2006.

**Signed and Sealed.** June 7, 2006.

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Wm. R. Wickersham, Commissioner

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Susan S. Lore, Commissioner

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Robert L. Hans, Commissioner

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William C. Warnes, Commissioner

**SEAL**

**ANY PARTY SEEKING REVIEW OF THIS ORDER MAY DO SO BY FILING A PETITION WITH THE APPROPRIATE DOCKET FEES IN THE NEBRASKA COURT OF APPEALS. THE PETITION MUST BE FILED WITHIN THIRTY DAYS AFTER THE DATE OF THIS ORDER AND MUST SATISFY THE REQUIREMENTS OF STATE LAW CONTAINED IN NEB. REV. STAT. §77-5019 (SUPP. 2005). IF A PETITION IS NOT TIMELY FILED, THIS ORDER BECOMES FINAL AND CANNOT BE CHANGED.**