

**TOWNSHIP OF COLTS NECK
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
SEPTEMBER 19, 2007
7:00 P.M. AT TOWN HALL**

The special meeting of the Colts Neck Township Committee was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Stuart followed by a salute to the flag. The following statement was read by Township Administrator/Clerk, Robert Bowden: "The notice requirements of the New Jersey Public Meetings Law have been satisfied by forwarding a "News Release" to the Asbury Park Press on August 11, 2007 stating that a special meeting of the Colts Neck Township Committee would be held on September 19, 2007 at 7:00 p.m., Colts Neck Town Hall, 124 Cedar Drive, Colts Neck, for the purpose of interviewing bidding revaluation firms. The notice requirements have been posted on the Township Bulletin Board and a copy is on file in the office of the Township Clerk."

Roll call by Mr. Bowden indicated the following:

Present: Mayor Stuart, Committeemembers Forester, Florek (arriving late) and Schatzle

Also Present: Robert Bowden; Eldo Magnani, John O. Bennett, III, Esq., and Beth Kara

Absent: Deputy Mayor Hennessy

Mr. Bowden advised that Deputy Mayor Hennessy was out of town this evening.

Mayor Stuart opened tonight's meeting stating four appraisal firms provided bid proposals for the Township revaluation, and each firm has 30 minutes allotted this evening for a presentation to the Township Committee in open public forum. Members of competing firms were asked to wait in the Assessor's Office, out of earshot of all other presentations and left the building after their presentation.

Mr. Florek arrived at 7:02 p.m.

1. APPRAISAL SYSTEMS, INC., \$319,500.00

Representatives from Appraisal Systems, Inc., were Mr. Ernest F. Del Guercio, Sr., founder and CEO; Mr. Ernest F. Del Guercio, Jr., President; Mr. Glen Sherman, Executive Vice-President; and Mr. Jason Cohen, Vice President, Brick Office.

Appraisal Systems will prepare press releases and brochures, and will meet with all taxpayers and groups to explain the process. In addition, all sales related data, including sales maps, comparable sales, etc., will be exhibited and used at all informal hearings. A web site will be created providing information on the revaluation process, which includes information about the field personnel, their current location, publication of neighborhood delineations, publication of preliminary and final assessed values and information related to scheduling informal taxpayer hearings.

In Montclair, all preliminary assessments were posted on the website, which helped to gain public confidence on the process. The website provided information for Montclair taxpayers prior to informal hearings.

Pages 55 through 94 of the bid proposal includes resumes of staff, which were described by Mr. Del Guercio as "the best and the brightest in the industry". Staff was thought to be the most important factor since methodology of a revaluation is standard, while execution varies among firms. Well over 90% of the staff has been retained over the past five years.

Appraisal Systems has experience with farm assessed properties in Warren and Sussex Counties. Their record in defense of tax appeals was said by Mr. Del Guercio to be excellent, and the Governing Body was urged to contact references.

Appraisal Systems 10-15% come to informal hearings and 5-6% file appeals. Appraisal Systems has a 90-95% rate of inside review of properties.

If the tax maps are approved, Mr. Del Guercio stated Appraisal Systems could begin the process within 30 days, assigning four to six high-end home field inspectors to Colts Neck. These inspectors would remain in Colts Neck to ensure consistency of findings.

Mr. Del Guercio advised Appraisal Systems has never been late in completing a revaluation. When the receipt of approved tax maps was delayed, the County Board granted an extension for the completion of the revaluation. Appraisal Systems has never been penalized for being late.

2. CERTIFIED VALUATIONS, INC., \$300,000.00

Representatives from Certified Valuations, Inc. were Charles Femminella, Jr., Chief Appraiser; Robert Edgar, Appraiser; Ted Lamicella, Project Supervisor and Commercial Appraiser; and Justin Lamicella, Valuation Assistant. Mr. Femminella was the spokesperson at this presentation.

Certified Valuations was incorporated in 1976 and the background and experiences of Mr. Femminella were discussed in detail. When discussing work for the City of Newark, Mr. Femminella advised the work was projected to last three years and was completed in two years. "Administration left them alone to do their work, and the Assessor reviewed the work monthly."

Certified Valuations has a website that was up for one year; however, they do not like it. They hired another website firm and don't want to post where field inspectors will be working in the event imposters attempt to gain unauthorized entry. Mr. Magnani discussed the thorough police background investigation planned for each field investigator, three forms of identification each field investigator will be required to carry, website postings of photographs of each investigator, and the measures the Township plans to take to ensure the security of its residents.

Mr. Femminella stated this municipality is diverse, and they have experience with high end homes, golf courses and with farms in Bergen, Sussex, Warren, Ocean and Mercer Counties. Messrs. Edgar, Femminella and J. Lamicella would inspect the high end homes, while other staff would inspect all other homes. Mr. Femminella stated Mr. Edgar is with the firm 40 years.

Five field inspectors from the Toms River Office and two crew chiefs would be assigned to Colts Neck. The first year would involve inspections and consulting with the Tax Assessor and reviewing County data. The second year would include sales analyses and farm evaluations. The staff is prepared to set up at Town Hall or wherever designated. Certified Valuations has nine certified licensed appraisers and six certified tax assessors on staff. They have a 93% rate of in-home inspections. Mr. Femminella stated they need the work, and if the Governing Body is looking for a company to be out in the field, Certified Valuations is ready.

Mr. Femminella advised they have been late on a revaluation. The contract was approved and the maps were approved six months later. Five staff members were allocated to the job; however, given the six-month delay, ten were needed and it was difficult to make up for lost time. In another instance, a contract was signed in December, but Certified was asked to begin the work after the May election. Mr. Femminella stated they work well with the needs of the municipality reviewed.

3. TYLER TECHNOLOGIES, INC., \$320,100.00

Representatives from Tyler Technologies, Inc. were not present this evening. No prior notice was received advising representatives from Tyler would not be attending this evening's meeting.

Mayor Stuart then moved the agenda to the next firm scheduled this evening.

4. REALTY APPRAISAL COMPANY, \$299,000.00

Representatives from Realty Appraisal Company were Mr. Steven Rubenstein, Certified Tax Assessor and Certified General Appraiser; and Mr. Neil Rubenstein, Certified Tax Assessor and Certified Appraiser.

Mr. Steven Rubenstein stated Realty Appraisal Company was founded in 1934 by his grandfather, and it is the oldest revaluation firm in New Jersey. Realty Appraisal performed revaluations within Colts Neck in 1972, 1979, 1987 and a reassessment in 1994. He and Mr. Neil Rubenstein participated the 1987 and 1994 work within Colts Neck. Many of their field inspectors have worked in Colts Neck and Realty staff have appraised most towns surrounding Colts Neck.

With regard to County Tax Board appeals following revaluations, out of total of 72,599 line items, 1,474 first year appeals or 2% of line items were made in the uncertain market of 2006.

Mr. Rubenstein stated Realty Appraisal Company has experience appraising farms and horse farms as well as upper end homes in Rumson and estate-type properties in Middletown. While zoning differs between municipalities, the high quality homes are similar.

Mr. Rubenstein stated they will meet with groups and councils to discuss the revaluation process, and will provide public relations informational materials developed. The cost of publications, mailing and appeals is included in the bid price.

A projected time line for the revaluation was provided to the Governing Body, starting in December 2007 and ending in December 2008. Five to six full-time field inspectors already familiar with Colts Neck properties would be utilized. At the end of the job, informal reviews with residents would be held during day, evening, Saturday and Sunday hours to review the property record cards and review sales data. The actual inspectors will be present at the informal reviews.

Realty Appraisal was two weeks beyond the appeals deadline in completing the Fairlawn revaluation. Mr. Rubenstein stated his firm works well with Monmouth County. Current workload is estimated as medium and next year is also estimated as medium. Realty Appraisal staff are ready to immediately begin preparatory work. During the beginning phase, a newsletter would be sent to property owners describing the process as well as letters and a brochure. After six weeks, field inspectors would commence work in the community. Realty Appraisal employs 25-26 full-time field inspectors living in Monmouth County. Realty Appraisal has a 90-97% rate of in-home reviews.

5. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:

With no further comments, Mayor Stuart opened the meeting for public comment.

Mr. Rick Ambrosia, a resident, questioned how far back sales went. He was advised it was generally one year. If there was not much data, two years would be used. Mr. Rubenstein advised this community may need to go back two years. Mr. Magnani advised prior information is used to support a trend.

Mr. Chris Lupia, a resident, asked if Realty Appraisal has enough appraisers. Mr. Rubenstein responded, yes, his brothers and two other appraisers. Mr. Lupia then commented on what occurred during the last revaluation with Realty Appraisal staff. Mr. Rubenstein commended Mr. Lupia on his excellent recall and advised field inspectors are not appraisers, and Realty does have enough appraisers.

Ms. Virginia Amend, a resident and editor of the Colts Neck Calendar, questioned the effect of tear downs in neighborhoods with 1970s housing. Mr. Rubenstein advised a tear down is an inflated price and renders all others obsolete. They rely on the sales of dwellings actually lived in.

With no further comments from the public, Mayor Stuart closed the meeting to public comment.

6. **RESOLUTION 2007-139:** EXECUTIVE SESSION was read by Mayor Stuart at 8:41 p.m. Mr. Florek made a motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Forester and unanimously carried by all present.

RECORD OF VOTE						
Committeeman	M	S	Yes	No	NV	Ab
Mayor Stuart			X			
Hennessy						X
Forester		S	X			
Florek		M	X			
Schatzle			X			
X - indicates vote NV - Not Voting Ab – Absent M - Moved S - Seconded						

Mr. Bowden stated no formal action will be taken tonight.

Meeting adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

 Robert Bowden
 Township Administrator/Clerk

RB:bk