

West Galveston Island POA

Board of Directors Meeting

The West Galveston Island POA (WGIPOA) Board of Directors meeting was held at the Courtyard by Marriott, Galveston, Texas on April 16, 2016. Jerry Mohn, President, called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM. The quorum was established by the attendance of Directors: Bermuda Beach – Joan Quigley-Newton, Dunes of West Beach – Jay Lendrum, Isla Del Sol- Boyd K. Carr, Laffite's Cove - Bet Jennings, Palm Beach - Melanie Perry, Pirates Beach/Cove - Dick Kuriger, Pointe San Luis – Susan Gonzales/subst., Sportsman Road - Paul Voinis, Terramar - Craig Vance.

The Board reviewed the minutes and the financials. Motion by Dick Kuriger and seconded by Melanie Perry the Board by unanimous vote approved the financial report and minutes of February 19, 2016 and March 14, 2016.

Jerry Mohn recognized corporate sponsor CKM Management and elected officials including County Commissioner Precinct 2 Joe Giusti, District 6 City Council Carolyn Sunseri, and Galveston County Tax Assessor/Collector Cheryl Johnson.

Community Policing: Officer Joey Quiroga stressed citizens lock their cars. To many break ins are occurring and people need to realize if a car is unlocked, thieves can easily steal it. Joey gave out his cell number, 409-256-0762, to call anytime.

District 6 Happenings: Carolyn Sunseri advised two police candidates for the Galveston Chief of Police were selected and a choice will be made shortly for one to replace Henry Porretto. May 7 elections are coming up and Carolyn stressed that every registered voter should vote; early voting begins April 25. The Charter Review Committee came up with 20 propositions to consider in the city elections.

Cheryl Johnson: Jerry Mohn introduced Cheryl Johnson, Tax Assessor/Collector for Galveston County. The presentation title is "Appraisal Notices Are On the Way!"

Cheryl Johnson stated that the Taxes Two Step might be a solution following the Proposition 13 adopted in California. In 1978, California voters petitioned for and passed Proposition 13 – an acquisition value system-by a 2 to 1 margin. The state's market value based tax system-very similar to Texas'-had been pricing people out of their homes and businesses for years. The change resulted in change from market value to acquisition or sales price value, used 1975 value as base year, allows parent-child transfer of base year value, cut & capped combined local tax rate to \$1 and restricted increases in value to 2% per year (based on the Current Price Index).

Government most abused power is its ability to take people's property through taxation. Taxation needs to be fair and not complex. It needs to be progressive policy with property owner in control, needs to be transparent, and cost effective to be administered. Texas property tax is not fair, not progressive, not transparent or easily and economically administered. In California taxes are based on price paid. The Constitutionality of Proposition 13 was decided by the US Supreme Court (Nordlinger v. Hahn 505 U.S. 1 1992). Justice Blackmun stated his two rational or reasonable considerations are the State has a legitimate interest in local neighborhood preservation, continuity, and stability. Second, The State legitimately can conclude that a new owner at the time of acquiring his property does not have the same reliance interest warranting protection against higher taxes, as does an existing owner.

At this time State law requires the County Appraisal District to assess property at its January 1st market value. Protesting your taxes is not two steps it's seven!

Step 1. File a formal protest or call for an informal conference with an appraiser. Deadline May 31st. There are two reasons to protest: 1) incorrect market value. Are the records correct, are exemptions in place, are improvements

correct, check classification, are their certain conditions or depreciation that could impact the value. Take pictures at the worst times when there is a lot of traffic, parking in the street, power lines. There are three types of depreciation: physical - condition, economic – excessive number of houses for sale and functional - bad floor plan, and;

2) Unequal appraisal. Compare price per square foot on identical property.

Step 2. Research your CAD records. Obtain an appraisal card. Request it via email or when you attend the informal conference with the appraiser. Most of the information you need is on line at www.galvestoncad.org. If you recently purchased your property for less than the 2015 value proposed by GCAD. Errors are a good basis for protest. Take photos or estimates of repair and provide this information as the basis of your protest.

Step 3. Estimate the value using the protest spreadsheet (www.galcotax.com under Press Releases and Important Information tab) Compare your values to others in your neighborhood. You can only obtain sales the CAD used when filing or requesting a formal ARB hearing. Adjust for differences. If similar houses are valued less you have a good unequal value protest.

Step 4. Attend the Informal and then ARB Hearing. If you file a formal protest you will be notified of the date and time of the ARB hearing. Go early. You can reschedule this hearing only once.

Step 5. Appraisal Review Board (ARB) Hearing. The ARB has a three-citizen panel, a CAD and a CAD appraiser and a hearing clerk. Bring four (4) copies of everything. After being sworn in the hearing will be recorded. The CAD appraiser will present their case and then it is the property owner's turn to present their case. The ARB panel will announce their decision.

Step 6. Arbitration or File Lawsuit in State District Court. ARB decisions can only be overturned by filing a lawsuit. There are costs for filing. Fight for dollars – not pennies.

Step 7. Repeat Process Every Year

Added advice from Cheryl Johnson:

*Discuss condition, bids, photos, evidence of conditions and sales.

*Burden of proof is on CAD to prove value is correct.

*During conference don't feel pressured to accept.

*Bring four (4) packets of evidence: photos, appraisal card, maps of property and one of sales, list of repairs needed with estimates and list of actual repairs.

*Be ready to discuss differences, be honest, positive, and polite. Don't show anger or be accusatory and don't tell them to buy your home.

Other Topics: Jerry Mohn advised the West Galveston Island Entrance Channel Dredging and Marsh Restoration Project was completed and submitted to the TCEQ for RESTORE Funds. The project requested \$423,500 with \$368,000 from RESTORE and match from the 10 subdivisions of \$55,500. The request is for engineering study and awards will probably be made later in the year.

Meeting adjourned at 10:40 A.M. Recording Secretary: Susan Gonzales