



**FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE DECISION  
ILLINOIS PROPERTY TAX APPEAL BOARD**

APPELLANT: St. Charles Country Club  
DOCKET NO.: 15-01241.001-C-3  
PARCEL NO.: 09-22-452-058

The parties of record before the Property Tax Appeal Board are St. Charles Country Club, the appellant, by attorney Patrick C. Keeley of Piccione Keeley & Associates, Ltd. in Wheaton; and the Kane County Board of Review.

Based on the facts and exhibits presented in this matter, the Property Tax Appeal Board hereby finds A Reduction in the open space assessment of the property as established by the Kane County Board of Review is warranted. The correct open space assessed valuation of the property is:

**LAND:** \$237,435  
**IMPR.:** \$1,375,312  
**TOTAL:** \$1,612,747

Subject only to the State multiplier as applicable.

**Statement of Jurisdiction**

The appellant timely filed the appeal from a decision of the Kane County Board of Review (Appellant's Exhibit 2) pursuant to section 16-160 of the Property Tax Code (35 ILCS 200/16-160) challenging the assessment for the 2015 tax year. The Property Tax Appeal Board finds that it has jurisdiction over the parties and the subject matter of the appeal.

**Findings of Fact**

The subject parcel consists of approximately 135.23 acres and is part of eight tax parcels of land owned and used by the St. Charles Country Club (SCCC) as part of a golf course with a total of approximately 218 acres. The subject parcel is improved with a parking lot, a 3,080 square foot maintenance building, a 5,344 square foot maintenance building, a 2,455 square foot pool house, a 3,444 square foot swimming pool and a clubhouse containing approximately 18,861 square feet of ground floor area. The clubhouse also has a canopy with 2,000 square feet and an addition of

500 square feet built in 2009.<sup>1</sup> The property is located in St. Charles, St. Charles Township, Kane County.<sup>2</sup>

The Property Tax Appeal Board had set a consolidated hearing with Docket Nos. 13-02088.001-C-3, 14-01913.001-C-3 and 15-01241.001-C-3. The parties filed a Joint Motion for Waiver of Hearing and requested the Property Tax Appeal Board consider the matter upon the briefs submitted by the parties. Separate decisions will be issued for each appeal.

The appellant, through counsel, contends the clubhouse on the subject parcel should receive the "open space" assessment as provided by section 10-155 of the Property Tax Code (35 ILCS 200/10-155). The appellant's counsel asserted in the brief that it was not contesting the swimming pool and pool house valuation and inclusion as improvements. The appellant asserted that for tax year 2015 it applied for and received "open space" designation for portions of certain parcels or the entirety of real estate under eight separate Property Identification Numbers (PINs), including the subject PIN. (See Appellant's Exhibit 1.) The open space designation, however, was not granted to the clubhouse located on the subject PIN 09-22-452-058. The appellant's counsel asserted in the brief that the operative facts are virtually identical for 2015 as in 2013 – reflected in the same exact evidence submitted in support of the 2013 and 2014 appeals before the Property Tax Appeal. The appellant contends the assessment ignores the substantial nexus of these improvements to conserving the open space provided by the golf course, a relationship which entitles the clubhouse to an assessment in whole or part as open space.

The appellant argues that the improvements comprising the direct golf facilities in the clubhouse should be included in their entirety as "open space" due to their substantial nexus in supporting and facilitating use of the golf course and thereby conserving it as open space. The appellant identified these areas in the clubhouse as the "Men's Locker Room," "Women's Locker Room," the hallways and restrooms servicing the locker rooms, the "19<sup>th</sup> Hole" eating facility, the "Pro Shop" and the storage areas related to these facilities. These areas were identified on Appellant's Exhibit A-3 depicting the lower level floor plan of the clubhouse. According to the Appellant's Exhibit 3b, these rooms have a combined area of 9,850 square feet of building area. The appellant contends that without these facilities the golf course would not exist.

The appellant asserted that the remaining facilities at the clubhouse also bear a substantial nexus to the golf course usage, but are also used in part by services, guests and amenities not directly serving and supporting the golf course operation. The appellant explained that the SCCC had 306 total members as of December 31, 2014. Of these members, 201 or 66% were golfing members of various categories. (See Appellant's Exhibit 5.) The appellant further asserted that these golfing members and golf related activities generated 89% of the total revenue for SCCC. (See Appellant's Exhibit 4.)

The appellant also explained that the banquet hall in the clubhouse is subject to a somewhat different analysis since it is the one facility that is also used by non-members on a consistent

---

<sup>1</sup> Appellant's Exhibit 2a is identified as St. Charles Assessor General Parcel Information for the subject property and indicates the clubhouse has two-stories with a gross building area of 38,222 square feet.

<sup>2</sup> The Property Tax Appeal Board takes notice of the decisions it issued in the companion appeals identified by Docket No. 13-02088.001-C-3 and Docket No. 14-01913.001-C-3. The descriptive information about the subject property is taken from those appeals and corresponds in part with Appellant's Exhibit 2a.

basis and generates separate revenue from the membership. The appellant asserts that 39% of the revenue and activities for the banquet hall space is generated by golfing members and golf-related activities. According to the appellant by combining the banquet hall revenue generated by golfing members with the overall rate of 89% of revenue that is golf related, there is an overall percentage of golf or golf member revenue which is 85% of SCCC's total revenue.

According to the appellant the substantial majority of the use of the improvements with a dual use is with golf related activities and/or members. The appellant asserts that if analyzed by the ratio of golf membership to non-golf membership and public use, the golf-related usage was 72% in 2015. If the activities and use are allocated by virtue of financial impact, usage with a substantial nexus to the golf course is a combined 85% in 2015.

Appellant's counsel contends that those facilities used exclusively for golf-related activities and support must be assessed at the rate for "Open Space" use category afforded to the golf course itself, which includes the locker rooms, the Pro Shop, the 19<sup>th</sup> Hole Grill, and the adjacent hallways. With respect to the other spaces in the clubhouse, the appellant's counsel contends that consideration must be given to the primary use, which is to enhance and facilitate golf members and other golfers use and willingness to use the golf course even though these spaces are used to a lesser extent by non-golfing members and outside parties. The appellant argues that because golf usage substantially outweighs the non-golf usage, whether measured by proportion of membership (72%) or by revenues (89%), SCCC clubhouse and related improvements have a substantial nexus to the golf course and conserving its open space status and should be assessed as such.

The appellant contends that if it is determined that those facilities that are not directly golf-related should be assessed as open space only in proportion to their use or relationship to the golf course and golf activity, those multi-use spaces should be considered at least 72% golf course related (based on membership) or 85% golf related (based on revenues); therefore, treated as open space, since those monies generated by golfing members and golf-related activities and guests provide the funds and revenue which permit the golf course open space to exist and thrive.

The appellant argues that the improvements on the subject parcel should be assessed as open space in their entirety. Alternatively, if a proportionate basis is to be used, the appellant contends that the facilities and amenities of the clubhouse used specifically and directly to enhance use of the golf course should be assessed entirely as open space while the remaining portions of the clubhouse should be assessed as open space in proportion to their use by golf members or with relation to the financial impact upon use of and conserving the golf course. The percentage of use is a minimum of 72%, based on the ratio of golfing members to the members of the SCCC as a whole. The percentage based on revenue was asserted to be 85%. After deducting the assessments attributable to the swimming pool and pool house the appellant obtained a base assessment for the clubhouse and improvements of \$1,886,285. Applying these percentages to the appellant indicated the clubhouse and related improvements range from \$282,943 to \$528,160.

The appellant's submission also included an affidavit from Ken Vranek, the Club Manager of the SCCC. Vranek stated that Appellant's Exhibits A-3 and A-4 were scale drawings of the lower and upper floors of the SCCC clubhouse. The affiant stated that as of December 31, 2014,

SCCC had 306 dues-paying members with 201 or 66% being "golfing members." He asserted that the following lower level rooms and facilities marked on Exhibit A-3 are used exclusively for golf-related activities: (a) Men's Locker Room, (b) Ladies Locker Room, (c) Pro Shop, (d) 19<sup>th</sup> Hole Men's Golf Grill, and (e) hallways and restrooms, which comprise 9,850 square feet. The following lower level rooms were asserted to be used proportionately by golfers and non-golfers in the same ratio as the membership: (a) food storage and coolers, (b) maintenance/storage, and (c) Pub Restaurant, which comprise 6,150 square feet.

With respect to the following upper level rooms and facilities marked on Appellant's Exhibit A-4, Vranek asserted they are used proportionately by golfers and non-golfers in the same ratio as membership: (a) Kitchen, (b) Member Lounge, (c) Fox Chase Dining Room, (d) Charlemagne Dining Room, (e) lobby/reception, (f) main office, (g) accounting office, and (h) hallways, server stations and restrooms, which comprise 10,893 square feet.

Vranek stated the Banquet Hall has 4,868 square feet and is used by members and outside users. The affiant asserted golf members and activities account for 39% of the revenue derived from the Banquet Hall.

Vranek also asserted the revenues for the golf club for the fiscal year ended October 31, 2014 were accurately summarized on Appellant's Exhibit 4.

Included with the appellant's submission was a document entitled St. Charles Assessor General Parcel Information for PIN 09-22-452-058.000, the subject property, which was marked as Appellant's Exhibit 2a. The exhibit disclosed that the clubhouse and the attached canopy has a market ("appraised") value of \$5,092,808. The 500 square foot addition has a market ("appraised") value of \$74,183. (See Appellant's 2a, page 2.) The combined market value of the clubhouse is \$5,166,991, which would result in an assessment of \$1,722,158 using the statutory level of assessment of 33 1/3% of fair cash value. (35 ILCS 200/9-145.) Other improvements reported on the assessor's information sheet included a porch with 2,528 square feet, a swimming pool with 3,444 square feet, a garage with 5,060 square feet, a pool house with 2,455 square feet, 5,766 square feet of asphalt parking, a pole building with 3,080 square feet and a garage with 5,344 square feet.

Based on this evidence, the appellant requested on the appeal petition that the subject property have a land assessment of \$241,736, an improvement assessment of \$109,111 and a total assessment of \$350,847.

The Kane County Board of Review submitted is "Board of Review - Notes on Appeal" disclosing the subject property had a preferential open space assessment totaling \$1,617,048 with \$241,736 attributable to the land and \$1,375,312 attributable to the improvements.<sup>3</sup> The board of review disclosed on its "Board of Review - Notes on Appeal" that the assessment of the subject property prior to the preferential assessment as open space totaled \$4,457,490 with \$2,462,094

---

<sup>3</sup> The Property Tax Appeal Board takes notice that this was the same open space assessment provided for the 2014 tax year as set forth in Docket No. 14-01913.001-C-3.

attributable to the land and \$1,995,396 attributable to the improvements. The non-preferential land assessment equates to \$18,206.71 per acre ( $\$2,462,094 \div 135.23$  acres.)<sup>4</sup>

The board of review indicated that it was adopting the evidence submitted to the Property Tax Appeal Board for the 2013 tax year under Docket No. 13-02088.001-C-3 and the 2014 tax year under Docket No. 14-01913.001-C-3.

The Board takes notice of the decision it issued in the 2013 appeal (Docket No. 13-02088.001-C-3) and the analysis of the Kane County Supervisor of Assessments, which is repeated here in part to add context to the board of review position and understanding of its argument.

In the 2013 appeal, the Kane County Supervisor of Assessments stated the open space application was reviewed in light of the Appellate Court's holding in Lake County Board of Review v. Illinois Property Tax Appeal Board, 2013 IL App (2d) 120429, wherein it was noted the court held that the word "conserve" as used in section 10-155 of the Property Tax Code (35 ILCS 200/10-155) is to be construed narrowly and there must be some substantial nexus between the land for which the exemption is claimed and the landscaped area it is claimed to conserve. The supervisor of assessments also quoted language wherein the court went on to state that, "the improvement in question must directly relate to and thus facilitate the existence of the golf course."

For 2013, the Kane County Supervisor of Assessments concluded there was not a "substantial nexus" between the clubhouse, pool house and swimming pool and preserving open space. The Kane County Supervisor of Assessments did conclude there was a "substantial nexus" between the maintenance buildings and parking lot and preserving open space. The supervisor of assessments explained that the assessed value of the maintenance buildings and parking lots were deducted from the non-preferential improvement assessment to arrive at an open space improvement assessment. The supervisor of assessments also determined that 134.24 acres met the open space statutory requirement and were assessed at a market value of \$5,000 per acre or an assessment of \$1,666.50 per acre while .99 acres was assessed at \$18,388.78 per acre resulting in a preferential land assessment of \$241,916 in 2013.

For both the 2013 and 2014 tax years the Kane County Board of Review also submitted a memorandum prepared by Assistant State's Attorney Erin M. Gaeke in opposition to the appeal of St. Charles Country Club, which were substantially the same. The Board takes notice of the briefs submitted by the assistant state's attorney in the prior appeals, which are summarized to add context to the board of review position and understanding of its argument.

By way of factual background, the assistant state's attorney described the subject property as containing 135.23 acres and is part of an eight-parcel tract of land owned and used by the SCCC. The subject parcel is comprised of: part of a golf course; a parking lot, a 3,080 square foot

---

<sup>4</sup> There was no explanation provided by the board of review with respect to how the preferential open space assessment for the 2015 tax year was calculated. The preferential open space land assessment appears to be calculated using a preferential fair cash value for open space land of \$5,000 per acre or an assessment of \$1,666.50 per acre, which was applied to 134.24 acres resulting in an assessment of \$223,711. To this was added the non-preferential assessment for the remaining .99 acres for the clubhouse and other areas not designated as open space of \$18,025 ( $\$18,206.71 \times .99$ ) to arrive at the open space preferential land assessment of \$241,736.

maintenance building, a 5,344 square foot maintenance building, a 2,455 square foot pool house, a 3,444 square foot swimming pool and an 18,861 square foot clubhouse.

The board of review contends through counsel that the improvement at issue, the clubhouse, does not have a "substantial nexus" to the preservation of the golf course. The board of review cited Onwentsia Club v. Illinois Property Tax Appeal Board, 2011 Ill App (2d) 100388 ¶18, for the proposition that the standard for review of the open space statute *vis a vis* improvements was "whether the land, improved or not ... conserves as landscaped area (that is facilitates the existence of such an area)." Counsel for the board of review further explained that the court clarified its holding in a subsequent opinion when the court held the term "conserve" as it relates to the open space statute:

must be construed narrowly, and, in turn there must be some substantial nexus between the land for which the exemption is claimed and the landscaped area it is claimed to conserve. That is to say, the improvement in question must directly relate to and thus facilitate the existence of the golf course. Lake County Board of Review v. Illinois Property Tax Appeal Board, 2013, IL App (2d) 120429 ¶10.

The board of review contends the clubhouse does not conserve a landscaped area. It notes that the clubhouse is "mixed-use" in its operations: it has non-golfing members, the banquet halls are used by non-club members on a consistent basis, and houses dining and bar facilities for golf and non-golf members. The board of review further contends the appellant's discussion of revenue generation was misplaced in that it automatically apportions all revenue generated by the proportion of members to non-members with no direct evidence that more golf members generate more revenue than non-members at the facilities. The board of review further contends the Illinois legislature intended to classify improvements with regard to their "primary" use. Lake County Board of Review v. Illinois Property Tax Appeal Board, 2013, IL App (2d) 120429 ¶15. The board of review argued that the evidence set forth by SCCC indicates that the "primary use" of the clubhouse is not primarily used to conserve open space.

The board of review further contends that a proportional assessment as argued by the SCCC is not contemplated by the open space statute. The board of review noted that the Property Tax Appeal Board had found in its decision issued in Onwentsia III, Docket No. 06-00614.001-C-3 through 06-00614.004-C-3, P. 24, that "the plain language of section 10-155 of the [Property Tax] Code does not provide for a prorated improvement assessment" for a clubhouse on a golf course where that clubhouse is not used primarily for golf specific purposes and does not directly relate to and facilitate the existence of the golf course.

On behalf of the board of review counsel noted the appellant argues that revenues as it relates to golf and non-golf activities should be considered. The board of review stated that in Onwentsia III, the Property Tax Appeal Board recognized that the Illinois Appellate Court held that the consideration of revenue generation by the clubhouse as a decisive factor to determine whether this improvement facilitates the existence of the golf course would be too broad and lead to absurd results. (Citing Lake County Board of Review v. Illinois Property Tax Appeal Board, 2013, IL App (2d) 120429 ¶16.) The board of review contends that when removing revenue consideration, it appears the clubhouse does not bear a substantial nexus to the golf course.

In rebuttal the appellant's counsel explained the issues raised in this appeal are substantially identical to those raised in the prior appeals. Counsel submitted no substantive rebuttal evidence but asserted it was relying on its previously submitted brief and evidence.

### Conclusion of Law

The appellant's argument is based on a contention of law that the subject property, specifically the clubhouse, should receive the preferential open space assessment as provided by section 10-155 of the Property Tax Code (Code) (35 ILCS 200/10-155). Where a contention of law is made the standard of proof is the preponderance of the evidence. (See 5 ILCS 100/10-15).

The issue in this appeal deals with application of section 10-155 of the Code, the open space statute, to the clubhouse located on the subject golf course. The appellant made no specific argument with reference to the other improvements located on the subject PIN. Section 10-155 of the Code provides in part:

§10-155. Open space land; valuation. In all counties, in addition to valuation as otherwise permitted by law, land which is used for open space purposes and has been so used for the 3 years immediately preceding the year in which the assessment is made, upon application under Section 10-160, shall be valued on the basis of its fair cash value, estimated at the price it would bring at a fair, voluntary sale for use by the buyer for open space purposes.

Land is considered used for open space purposes if it is more than 10 acres in area and: . . .

(d) conserves landscaped areas, such as public or private golf courses. . .

Land is not considered used for open space purposes if it is used primarily for residential purposes.

If the land is improved with a water-retention dam that is operated primarily for commercial purposes, the water-retention dam is not considered to be used for open space purposes despite the fact that any resulting man-made lake may be considered to be used for open space purposes under this Section. (35 ILCS 200/10-155).

It is undisputed that the clubhouse is part of a golf course, which is one of the enumerated uses that qualify for the open space designation as set forth in section 10-155(d) of the open space statute. (35 ILCS 200/10-155(d)).

In Onwentsia Club v. Illinois Property Tax Appeal Board, 2011 IL App (2d) 100388, 953 N.E.2d 1010, 352 Ill.Dec. 329, (hereinafter "Onwentsia I") the court construed the word "conserve" in section 10-155(d) of the Property Tax Code to mean "to keep in a safe or sound state . . ." or "to preserve." 2011 IL App (2d) 100388 at ¶10, 953 N.E.2d at 1013. The court in construing section 10-155(d) of the Property Tax Code stated:

[T]he plain language of the statute indicates that the legislature intended to grant open-space status not only to land that actually constitutes a landscaped area, but also to land that facilitates the existence of (*i.e.*, conserves) a landscaped area. Id.

The court concluded that the fact that a particular piece of land has some improvement upon it - including in some cases a building - does not preclude the land from being deemed open space. Onwentsia I, 2011 IL App (2d) 100388 at ¶11, 953 N.E.2d at 1014. In construing the statute, the court determined that an improvement does not defeat the open space status unless the improvement is a commercial water-retention dam or a residential use. Onwentsia I, 2011 IL App (2d) 100388 at ¶14, 953 N.E.2d at 1014-1015. The court stated that, "the requirement that land *conserve* a landscaped area is broader and more inclusive than actually *being* a landscaped area." Onwentsia I, 2011 IL App (2d) 100388 at ¶14, 953 N.E.2d at 1015.

The court in Onwentsia I ultimately held "that land, even if it contains an improvement, may be granted open-space status if it conserves landscaped areas." 2011 IL App (2d) 100388 at ¶16, 953 N.E.2d at 1015. The court explained that "[a] golf course typically requires certain appurtenances in order to function, such as parking areas, a building in which to conduct the course business (*i.e.*, a clubhouse), and perhaps a building to support the physical maintenance of the course." Id. The court reasoned that "[s]ince they facilitate the existence of the golf course, and the course conserves landscaped areas, such improvements also can be said to conserve landscaped areas." Id.

The court explained that if an improvement contributes to the nature of the land as a landscaped area, it fits within the statutory definition of open space. The court stated that, "To the extent improved land facilitates a golf course being a golf course, it conserves a landscaped area." 2011 IL App (2d) 100388 at ¶18, 953 N.E.2d at 1016. In vacating the decision of the Property Tax Appeal Board and remanding with directions, the court in Onwentsia I determined that the Property Tax Appeal Board had applied an incorrect standard and should have considered whether the land, improved or not (so long as not improved with a residence or commercial water-retention dam), conserves a landscaped area (that is, facilitates the existence of such an area). 2011 IL App (2d) 100388 at ¶18, 953 N.E.2d at 1016.

In Lake County Board of Review v. Property Tax Appeal Board, 2013 IL App (2d) 120429, 989 N.E.2d 745, 371 Ill.Dec. 155, (hereinafter "Onwentsia II") the court again vacated the decision of the Property Tax Appeal Board and remanded the matter with directions. In Onwentsia II the court held the Property Tax Appeal Board's application of the relevant portion of section 10-155 of the Code was overbroad. In construing section 10-155(d) of the Code in Onwentsia II the court stated:

Nothing in the statute indicates that the legislature intended to create an enormous tax shelter whereby any parcel of property associated in some way with a golf course would escape taxation. Moreover, it is axiomatic that we are to construe tax exemptions "narrowly and strictly in favor of taxation" (citation omitted) and the burden to prove a tax exemption lies with the taxpayer (citation omitted). **Accordingly, we hold that "conserve" as it is used in section 10-155 of the Code (citation omitted) must be construed narrowly, and in turn, there must**

**be some substantial nexus between the land for which the exemption is claimed and the landscaped area it is claimed to conserve. That is to say, the improvement in question must directly relate to and thus facilitate the existence of the golf course.** Onwentsia II, 2013 IL App 2d 120429 ¶10, 989 N.E.2d at 750 (Emphasis added).

The court indicated whether such improvements "conserve" a landscaped area depend upon what portions of the club they serve. Onwentsia II, 2013 IL App 2d 120429 ¶12, 989 N.E.2d at 750. The court further noted that in some cases, different parts of an improvement may be easily discernible and severable for the purpose of ascertaining whether a portion conserves open space while another does not. Onwentsia II, 2013 IL App 2d 120429 ¶14, 989 N.E.2d at 751.

Appellant's Exhibit 2a disclosed that improvements on the subject parcel had a market ("appraised") value of \$5,986,786 which equates to a non-preferential assessment of \$1,995,396 when applying the statutory level of assessment of 33 1/3% of fair cash value. (35 ILCS 200/9-145.)

The record indicates that the clubhouse in question has a footprint of 18,861 square feet with a total building area for both floors of 37,722 square feet. Attached to the clubhouse is a canopy with 1,200 square feet and a 500 square foot addition that was added in 2009. (See Appellant's Exhibit 2a). The total building area of the clubhouse is 38,222 square feet. The exhibit disclosed that the clubhouse and the attached canopy has a market ("appraised") value of \$5,092,808. The 500 square foot addition has a market ("appraised") value of \$74,183. (See Appellant's Exhibit 2a, page 2.) The combined market value of the clubhouse is \$5,166,991, which would result in an assessment of \$1,722,158 using the statutory level of assessment of 33 1/3% of fair cash value. (35 ILCS 200/9-145.)

The appellant provided an affidavit from Ken Vranek, Club Manager of SCCC, asserting that certain areas of the lower level of the clubhouse are used exclusively for golf related activities, including the men's locker room with 4,316 square feet, ladies' locker room with 2,922 square feet, Pro Shop with 1,188 square feet, 19<sup>th</sup> Hole Men's Golf Grill with 1,030 square feet, and associated hallways and restrooms with 394 square feet, for a total area of 9,850 square feet. These areas were further identified on Appellant's Exhibit A-3. The Property Tax Appeal Board finds this affidavit was not refuted with any evidence from the Kane County Board of Review. The Board finds this area within the clubhouse has a direct and substantial nexus to the golf course landscaped areas as the use of these areas corresponds with the use of the course itself, which is composed of the tees, fairways and greens. The locker rooms provide an area for the players to change clothes as they prepare to play golf, the Pro Shop provides a location to pay green fees as well as to purchase golf clubs, apparel and gear used by golfers on the golf course, and the 19<sup>th</sup> Hole Men's Golf Grill provides a location for golfers to obtain food and refreshments while golfing. The Board finds these areas of the clubhouse directly serve and facilitate the use of the landscaped areas of the golf club. The area directly related to the golfing activities comprise approximately 26% of the total building area ( $9,850 \div 38,222$ ). Using this percentage, the Board finds the subject's clubhouse improvement assessment should be reduced by \$447,761 ( $\$1,722,158 \times .26$ ) to arrive at a revised open space assessment for the subject clubhouse of \$1,274,397. The appellant did not contest the swimming pool and pool house valuations and inclusion in the assessment. Appellant's Exhibit 2a disclosed these two

improvements have market values of \$130,183 and \$197,197, respectively, for a combined value of \$327,380, which equates to an assessment of \$109,116 using the statutory level of assessment. Adding the revised preferential clubhouse assessment and the assessment attributable to the pool and pool house results in a preferential improvement assessment of \$1,383,513 (\$1,274,397 + \$109,116), which is greater than the preferential open space improvement assessment granted by the board of review for the 2015 tax year of \$1,375,312. Therefore, given the foregoing calculations if open space were proportionately granted to the clubhouse, the Board finds a further reduction to the subject's preferential open space improvement assessment is not warranted.

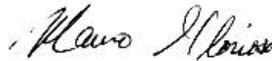
The Board further finds that based on the conclusion that 26% of the clubhouse is entitled to an open space designation also requires an adjustment to the subject's land assessment. Accordingly, the Board finds that 134.5 acres of the subject parcel is to be valued at the open space rate of \$5,000 per acre or an assessment of \$1,666.50 per acres for an assessment of \$224,144. The remaining .73 acres is to be assessed at \$18,206.71 per acre or \$13,291. The Property Tax Appeal Board finds the revised land assessment is \$237,435. Therefore, a reduction to the subject's preferential open space land assessment is appropriate.

The appellant's argument that the entire clubhouse should be assessed as open space or, alternatively, that a portion of the clubhouse should be assessed proportionately based either in relation to the number of golf members to the total membership of the SCCC or in relation to the revenue generated by golf members and related activities is misplaced. The remaining portions of the clubhouse include such items a food storage and coolers, maintenance/storage, kitchen, members lounge, dining areas, lobby reception area, office area, hallways, service stations and restrooms. Although these areas of the clubhouse are used by golf members for social activities, the evidence did not demonstrate that these areas within the clubhouse directly relate to and thus facilitate the existence of the golf course. The relationship between these areas of the clubhouse and the landscaped areas is less direct and more tenuous than those areas actually devoted to the use of the golf course itself. The Board finds that there is no showing by the appellant of a substantial nexus between the remaining portion of the clubhouse and the conserving or facilitating of the landscaped areas comprising the golf course.

The Board also gives little weight to the appellant's argument that the revenue generated in the clubhouse from golf members and related activities should be used as the basis to demonstrate a substantial nexus exists between the clubhouse and the landscaped area so as to allow the clubhouse to be assessed as open space. The court in Onwentsia II held the consideration of revenue generation by the clubhouse as a decisive factor to determine whether this improvement facilitates the existence of the golf course would be too broad and lead to absurd results. Onwentsia II, 2013 IL App 2d 120429 ¶16, 989 N.E.2d at 751. Clearly, the revenue generated by the activities within the clubhouse are of benefit to the SCCC and are used in part to maintain the property including the golf course. However, in light of the Appellate Court's findings in Onwentsia II, the Property Tax Appeal Board declines to use the revenues generated at the clubhouse from golf members and related activities as a basis to determine whether a substantial nexus exists between the clubhouse and the landscaped areas it purportedly conserves so as to confer the preferential open space designation either entirely upon the clubhouse or proportionally upon the clubhouse based upon revenues.

In conclusion the Board finds a reduction in the subject property's open space assessment is justified as to the land only for the 2015 tax year.

This is a final administrative decision of the Property Tax Appeal Board which is subject to review in the Circuit Court or Appellate Court under the provisions of the Administrative Review Law (735 ILCS 5/3-101 et seq.) and section 16-195 of the Property Tax Code. Pursuant to Section 1910.50(b) of the rules of the Property Tax Appeal Board (86 Ill.Admin.Code §1910.50(b)) the proceeding before the Property Tax Appeal Board is terminated when the decision is rendered. The Property Tax Appeal Board does not require any motion or request for reconsideration.



Chairman



Member



Acting Member



Member



Member

DISSENTING: \_\_\_\_\_

CERTIFICATION

As Clerk of the Illinois Property Tax Appeal Board and the keeper of the Records thereof, I do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true, full and complete Final Administrative Decision of the Illinois Property Tax Appeal Board issued this date in the above entitled appeal, now of record in this said office.

Date: January 16, 2018



Clerk of the Property Tax Appeal Board

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**

Section 16-185 of the Property Tax Code provides in part:

"If the Property Tax Appeal Board renders a decision lowering the assessment of a particular parcel after the deadline for filing complaints with the Board of Review or after adjournment of the session of the Board of Review at which assessments for the subsequent year or years of the same general assessment period, as provided in Sections 9-125 through 9-225, are being considered, the taxpayer may, within 30 days after the date of written notice of the Property Tax Appeal Board's decision, appeal the assessment for such subsequent year or years directly to the Property Tax Appeal Board."

In order to comply with the above provision, YOU MUST FILE A PETITION AND EVIDENCE WITH THE PROPERTY TAX APPEAL BOARD WITHIN 30 DAYS OF THE DATE OF THE ENCLOSED DECISION IN ORDER TO APPEAL THE ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPERTY FOR THE SUBSEQUENT YEAR OR YEARS. A separate petition and evidence must be filed for each of the remaining years of the general assessment period.

Based upon the issuance of a lowered assessment by the Property Tax Appeal Board, the refund of paid property taxes is the responsibility of your County Treasurer. Please contact that office with any questions you may have regarding the refund of paid property taxes.

PARTIES OF RECORD

AGENCY

State of Illinois  
Property Tax Appeal Board  
William G. Stratton Building, Room 402  
401 South Spring Street  
Springfield, IL 62706-4001

APPELLANT

St. Charles Country Club, by attorney:  
Patrick C. Keeley  
Piccione Keeley & Associates, Ltd.  
122C South County Farm Road  
Wheaton, IL 60187

COUNTY

Kane County Board of Review  
Kane County Government Center  
719 Batavia Ave., Bldg. C, 3rd Fl.  
Geneva, IL 60134