



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

APPELLANT: L. Harrison Bernbaum  
DOCKET NO.: 24-02070.001-R-2  
PARCEL NO.: 16-04-103-017

The parties of record before the Property Tax Appeal Board are L. Harrison Bernbaum, the appellant, by Ronald Kingsley, attorney-at-law of Lake County Real Estate Tax Appeal, LLC in Hawthorn Woods, and the Lake 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 assessment of the property as established by the **Lake** County Board of Review is warranted. The correct assessed valuation of the property is:

**LAND:** \$208,420  
**IMPR.:** \$599,832  
**TOTAL:** \$808,252

Subject only to the State multiplier as applicable.

**Statement of Jurisdiction**

The appellant timely filed the appeal from a decision of the Lake County Board of Review pursuant to section 16-160 of the Property Tax Code (35 ILCS 200/16-160) challenging the assessment for the 2024 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 property is improved with a two-story dwelling of brick exterior construction containing 10,473 square feet of living area.<sup>1</sup> The dwelling was constructed in 1991 and is approximately 33 years old. Features of the home include a full walk-out basement that is partially finished, central air conditioning, five fireplaces, four full bathrooms, six half bathrooms, and a built-in 4-car garage. The property has a 64,904 square foot of 1.49-acre site located in Lake Forest, West Deerfield Township, Lake County.

The appellant contends overvaluation as the basis of the appeal. In support of this argument the appellant submitted an appraisal estimating the subject property had a market value of \$2,425,000 as of April 8, 2024. The appraisal was prepared by Michael J. Sullivan, an Illinois

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<sup>1</sup> The Board finds the best evidence of size of the subject dwelling was contained in the appellant's appraisal that contained sketches of the subject dwelling with dimensions and calculations of the size of the dwelling.

Certified General Real Estate Appraiser. The fee simple property rights were appraised. The appraiser determined the highest and best use of the property is as improved. The appraiser conducted an interior and exterior inspection of the subject property on April 8, 2024, and included photographs of the interior and exterior of the property in the report.

The appraiser described the subject dwelling as having a slate roof, 10-foot ceilings, custom millwork, and a 2-story foyer with full wall windows, open staircase and marble tile flooring. The subject home has zoned HVAC with five furnaces. The appraiser also explained that over the garage are two offices and a family room. The appraiser further stated the full basement features a custom designed exercise room, bar with a large wine cellar, family room, second kitchen, bath and an exterior walkout rec room.

The appraiser stated that due to the older age of the improvements the cost approach was not applicable. Nevertheless, the appellant's appraiser developed cost approach to value and arrived at an indicated value by the cost approach of \$3,916,900.

The appraiser developed the sales comparison approach to value using three comparables sales and one pending sale. The comparables are improved with two-story colonial style dwellings of brick exterior construction with slate or wood shake roofs and range in size from 8,029 to 10,048 square feet of living area. The dwellings were built from 1975 to 1988. Each comparable has a full basement with three being partially finished, central air conditioning, two or four fireplaces, five or six full bathrooms, one or two half bathrooms and a 3-car or 4-car garage.<sup>2</sup> Comparable #3 has an inground swimming pool and a tennis court. Comparable #4 has an inground swimming pool. These properties have sites ranging in size from 1.69 to 2.85 acres. The comparables are located in Lake Forest from approximately .08 of a mile to 1.69 miles from the subject property. Comparables #1 through #3 sold from September 2023 to April 2024 for prices of \$2,000,000 or \$2,200,000 or from \$248.57 to \$271.71 per square foot of living area, including land. Comparable #4 has a list price of \$2,695,000 or \$268.21 per square foot of living area, including land. The appraiser adjusted comparable #4 for estimated list to sale price. Additionally, the appraiser adjusted the comparables for such differences from the subject in land area, roof construction, age, room count, gross living area, basement finish, garage bays, swimming pool, and/or tennis court. The adjusted prices for the comparables ranged from \$2,415,500 to \$2,453,000 and the appraiser estimated the subject had an indicated value under the sales comparison approach of \$2,425,000.

In reconciling the two approaches to value the appellant's appraiser adjudged the sales comparison approach to value to be the most reliable and arrived at an estimated market value for the subject of \$2,425,000. The appellant requested the subject's total assessment be reduced to \$808,252 to reflect the appraised value.

The board of review submitted its "Board of Review Notes on Appeal" disclosing the total assessment for the subject of \$952,232. The subject's assessment reflects a market value of

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<sup>2</sup> The board of review submission described appellant's appraisal comparable #1 as having two fireplaces.

\$2,856,982 or \$272.79 per square foot of living area, land included, when using 10,473 square feet of living area and the statutory level of assessment of 33.33%.<sup>3</sup>

In support of its contention of the correct assessment the board of review submitted information on three comparable sales with comparable #1 being the same property as appellant's appraisal comparable sale #1. The comparables are improved with two-story dwellings of brick or stucco exterior construction that range in size from 7,770 to 9,516 square feet of living area. The homes range in age from 22 to 36 years old. Each comparable has a basement with two having finished area, central air conditioning, and a garage ranging in size from 1,175 to 1,440 square feet of building area. The comparables have 5, 6 or 7 full bathrooms and two comparables have an additional 5 half bathrooms. The comparables have 2, 4 or 7 fireplaces. Comparable #3 has an inground swimming pool. These properties have sites ranging in size from 73,616 to 100,188 square feet of land area. The comparables have the same assessment neighborhood code as the subject property. The sales occurred from May 2022 to September 2023 for prices ranging from \$2,000,000 to \$3,100,000 or from \$249.10 to \$398.97 per square foot of living area, land included.

### **Conclusion of Law**

The appellant contends the market value of the subject property is not accurately reflected in its assessed valuation. When market value is the basis of the appeal the value of the property must be proved by a preponderance of the evidence. 86 Ill.Admin.Code §1910.63(e). Proof of market value may consist of an appraisal of the subject property, a recent sale, comparable sales or construction costs. 86 Ill.Admin.Code §1910.65(c). The Board finds the appellant met this burden of proof and a reduction in the subject's assessment is warranted.

The Board finds the best evidence of market value to be the appraisal submitted by the appellant estimating the subject property had a market value of \$2,425,000 as of April 8, 2024. The report disclosed the appraiser conducted an interior and exterior inspection of the subject and the appraiser provided a good description of the subject dwelling. The appraiser developed the cost approach to value and the sales comparison approach to value and gave most credence to the sales comparison approach to value. In the sales comparisons approach to value the appraiser used four comparables, three sales and one listing, with prices ranging from \$2,000,000 to \$2,695,000 or from \$248.57 to \$271.72 per square foot of living area, including land. The appraiser adjusted the comparables for various factors to make them more equivalent to the subject and arrived at adjusted prices ranging from \$2,415,500 to \$2,453,000. The appellant's appraiser's adjustments to the comparables to make them more equivalent to the subject were logical and not refuted by the board of review. The subject's assessment reflects a market value of \$2,856,982 or \$272.79 per square foot of living area, including land, which is above the appraised value of \$2,425,000.

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<sup>3</sup> Property Tax Appeal Board procedural rule section 1910.50(c)(1) provides that in all counties other than Cook, the three-year county wide assessment level as certified by the Illinois Department of Revenue (IDOR) will be considered. 86 Ill.Admin.Code §1910.50(c)(1). As of the development of this Final Administrative Decision, the IDOR has not published figures for tax year 2024.

The board of review provided three comparable sales, one of which was used by the appellant's appraiser. Board of review comparable #3 is given less weight as it is the least similar to the subject in dwelling size and the purchase price is an outlier that is approximately 47% higher than the next highest sale price on a per square foot of living area basis of the comparables submitted by the parties. Board of review comparable #2 sold least proximate in time to the assessment date at issue, which detracts from the weight given this sale. Nevertheless, this property sold for a price of \$2,525,000 or \$265.34 per square foot of living area, including land, which is below the market value reflected by the subject's assessment. The comparable is approximately 950 square feet smaller than the subject dwelling indicating an upward adjustment to the comparable would be appropriate for this difference. Conversely, board of review comparable #2 has a significantly larger site than the subject, is 10 years newer than the subject, has more bathrooms than the subject, and one more fireplace than the subject, indicating the comparable would require downward adjustments to make the property more equivalent to the subject for these differences. The Board finds board of review comparable #2 supports the conclusion the subject property is overvalued. In conclusion the Board finds the most credible evidence of market value to be the appraisal submitted by the appellant and further finds a reduction in the subject's assessment commensurate with the appellant's request is appropriate.

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(d) of the rules of the Property Tax Appeal Board (86 Ill.Admin.Code §1910.50(d)) 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



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:

March 17, 2026



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

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