

# INDIANA BOARD OF TAX REVIEW

## Final Determination Findings and Conclusions Lake County

**Petition #:** 45-001-02-1-5-00893  
**Petitioner:** Calvin Kennedy Sr.  
**Respondent:** Department of Local Government Finance  
**Parcel #:** 001-25-44-0037-0025  
**Assessment Year:** 2002

The Indiana Board of Tax Review (the Board) issues this determination in the above matter, and finds and concludes as follows:

### Procedural History

1. The informal hearing as described in Ind. Code § 6-1.1-4-33 was held on February 9, 2004, in Lake County, Indiana. The Department of Local Government Finance (the DLGF) determined that the Petitioner's property tax assessment for the subject property was \$3,300, and notified the Petitioner on March 31, 2004.
2. The Petitioner filed a Form 139L on April 26, 2004.
3. The Board issued a notice of hearing to the parties dated October 4, 2004.
4. A hearing was held on November 8, 2004 in Crown Point, Indiana before Special Master Peter Salvesson.

### Facts

5. The subject property is located at 744 Connecticut Street, Gary, in Calumet Township.
6. The subject property is a vacant residential lot consisting of 0.086 acres of land.
7. The Special Master did not conduct an on-site visit of the property.
8. The DLGF determined that the assessed value of the property is \$3,300 for the land. There are no improvements on the subject property.
9. The Petitioner requested a value of \$800 for the property.
10. Calvin Kennedy Sr., the owner of the property, and John Toumey, an assessor/auditor with DLGF, appeared at the hearing and were sworn as witnesses.

## Issues

11. Summary of Petitioner's contentions in support of an alleged error in the assessment:
- a) The Petitioner purchased the property for \$770 at a tax sale in 2002. *Kennedy testimony; Petitioner Ex. 1.* No improvements have been made in the area since then. *Kennedy testimony.*
  - b) Gary Urban Enterprise Association once offered \$2,000 but then discontinued buying properties before the transaction was complete. *Id.*
  - c) A lot on the same block as the subject property is being offered at tax sale for \$256 and it has a house on it. *Kennedy testimony; Petitioner Ex. 2.*
12. Summary of Respondent's contentions in support of the assessment:
- a) The physical characteristics of the subject property are properly reflected on the property record card. *Toumey testimony; Resp't Ex. 2.*
  - b) A 20% negative influence factor accounts for the unimproved nature of the subject property. *Id.*

## Record

13. The official record for this matter is made up of the following:
- a) The Petition and all subsequent submissions by either party.
  - b) The tape recording of the hearing labeled Lake Co - 569.
  - c) Exhibits:

Petitioner's Exhibit 1:	Tax Sale Receipt
Petitioner's Exhibit 2:	Tax Sale Listing for Neighborhood
Respondent's Exhibit 1:	Form 139L Petition
Respondent's Exhibit 2:	Subject Property Record Card
Respondent's Exhibit 3:	Aerial Map
Board Exhibit A:	Form 139L Petition
Board Exhibit B:	Notice of Hearing
Board Exhibit C:	Sign-In Sheet
  - d) These Findings and Conclusions.

## Analysis

14. The most applicable laws are:
- a) A Petitioner seeking review of a determination of an assessing official has the burden to establish a prima facie case proving that the current assessment is incorrect, and specifically what the correct assessment would be. *See Meridian Towers East & West v. Washington Twp. Assessor*, 805 N.E.2d at 475, 478 (Ind. Tax Ct. 2003); *see also, Clark v. State Bd. of Tax Comm'rs*, 694 N.E.2d 1230 (Ind. Tax Ct. 1998).
  - b) In making its case, the taxpayer must explain how each piece of evidence is relevant to the requested assessment. *See Indianapolis Racquet Club, Inc. v. Washington Twp. Assessor*, 802 N.E.2d 1018, 1022 (Ind. Tax Ct. 2004) (“[I]t is the taxpayer’s duty to walk the Indiana Board....through every element of the analysis”).
  - c) Once the Petitioner establishes a prima facie case, the burden shifts to the assessing official to rebut the Petitioner's evidence. *See American United Life Ins. Co. v. Maley*, 803 N.E.2d 276 (Ind. Tax Ct. 2004). The assessing official must offer evidence that impeaches or rebuts the Petitioner's evidence. *Id.*; *Meridian Towers*, 805 N.E.2d at 479.
15. The Petitioner did not provide sufficient evidence to support the Petitioner’s contentions. This conclusion was arrived at because:
- a) The Petitioner contends that the assessment of the subject parcel is too high. The Petitioner submitted evidence that the parcel was purchased at a tax sale in May 2002 for \$770.
  - b) The 2002 Real Property Assessment Manual (the Manual) defines the “true tax value” of real estate as “the market value-in-use of a property for its current use, as reflected by the utility received by the owner or a similar user, from the property.” 2002 REAL PROPERTY ASSESSMENT MANUAL at 2 (incorporated by reference at 50 IAC 2.3-1-2). The Manual further provides that for the 2002 general reassessment, a property’s assessment must reflect its market value-in-use as of January 1, 1999. MANUAL at 4. While an actual sale of a property may be a good indicator of its actual market value, the sale must be an “arm’s-length transaction.” In other words, a sale does not necessarily indicate the market value of the property unless that sale happens in a competitive and open market under all conditions requisite to a fair sale, in which the buyer and seller are typically motivated. MANUAL at 10. “Fair market value’ is what a willing buyer, under no compulsion to buy, would pay a willing seller, under no compulsion to sell.” *Second National Bank of Richmond v. State*, 366 N.E.2d 694, 696 (Ind. Ct. App. 1977). A tax sale purchase of property does not satisfy the conditions of a competitive and open market, and the buyer and seller being typically willing, motivated and under no compulsion to buy or sell. Thus, the purchase price

of property obtained in a tax sale is not, by itself, probative evidence of market value of a property.

- c) Petitioner testified that a property with a house on the lot that is located on the same block as the subject property is being offered at tax sale for \$256. However, evidence of a single additional tax sale or even several additional tax sales in the subject property's neighborhood is insufficient to prove that the market for property in this neighborhood is almost exclusively by and through tax sale.
- d) For the reasons set forth, the Petitioner has failed to make a prima facie case that the assessment of the subject property is incorrect.

### **Conclusion**

16. The Petitioner did not make a prima facie case. The Board finds in favor of Respondent.

### **Final Determination**

In accordance with the above findings and conclusions the Indiana Board of Tax Review now determines that the assessment should not be changed.

ISSUED: \_\_\_\_\_

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Commissioner,  
Indiana Board of Tax Review

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

### - APPEAL RIGHTS -

You may petition for judicial review of this final determination pursuant to the provisions of Indiana Code § 6-1.1-15-5. The action shall be taken to the Indiana Tax Court under Indiana Code § 4-21.5-5. To initiate a proceeding for judicial review you must take the action required within forty-five (45) days of the date of this notice. You must name in the petition and in the petition's caption the persons who were parties to any proceeding that led to the agency action under Indiana Tax Court Rule 4(B)(2), Indiana Trial Rule 10(A), and Indiana Code §§ 4-21.5-5-7(b)(4), 6-1.1-15-5(b). The Tax Court Rules provide a sample petition for judicial review. The Indiana Tax Court Rules are available on the Internet at <http://www.in.gov/judiciary/rules/tax/index.html>. The Indiana Trial Rules are available on the Internet at [http://www.in.gov/judiciary/rules/trial\\_proc/index.html](http://www.in.gov/judiciary/rules/trial_proc/index.html). The Indiana Code is available on the Internet at <http://www.in.gov/legislative/ic/code>.