

Tax Officials Explain Appraisals to Commissioners

By MARK R. MOSS
Chronicle Staff Writer

Some East Winston residents still are not satisfied with explanations from city and county officials about why property in predominantly black communities is depreciating at an alarming rate.

The latest explanation came last week when officials from the Forsyth County Tax Collector Department presented a detailed explanation to the Board of County Commissioners. The officials told the County Commissioners — and the few residents there — how they assess the value of homes. The officials said they did this to show that their valuations of homes in East Winston were fair.

Their presentation, however, did not satisfy the handful of residents who were present.

"They seem to take numbers and do what they want to do with them," said Jocelyn Johnson, president of the East Winston Restoration Association.

Jack Sprinkle, the county's tax assessor and collector, closed the presentation — as he has in the past — by advising residents who wanted their homes reappraised to call or visit the office individually.

"Sprinkle told us at that first meeting (Feb. 19) that they had reduced 18 percent of the properties in the county," said Lois Hanes, of 1612 E. 11th St. "But it seems to me that those that got reduced were all in East Winston."

Pete Rodda, an assistant tax assessor, used maps, charts and graphs to explain the type of property located in an area of East Winston bounded by 10th and 21st streets and Cameron and Cleveland avenues.

Following the meeting, Johnson took issue with the boundaries because they extended beyond those established at the Feb. 23 meeting.

Rodda, however, said it didn't make any difference because the sales that occurred in the area were concentrated south of 14th Street.

"This is a very challenging area to look at from an assessor standpoint," said Rodda, who who said that of the 727 parcels in the area, 197 are owned by the city, 59 by religious or charitable organizations

and 25 are non-residential. The remaining 446 are residential.

An assessor's goal, Rodda explained, is to match the assessor's valuation of a house with the sales price of that same house. The assessment ratio, which is found by dividing the assessed value by the sale price should ideally be 100 percent, he said. If the assessment ratio is over 100 percent, that means the assessed value of the house is lower than the sales price.

The 1993 assessment of some homes in East Winston was lower than the 1988 appraisals, which is what angered some of the residents.

Rodda used the assessment ratio figures to point how out of line the assessments for homes on Corneliuss Court, a street that extends

south off of 14th Street. One home sold for \$63,000 in 1988, but at the same time was assessed at \$46,700, an assessment ratio of 73 percent. The reassessed value of the home this year is \$59,900, with a assessment ratio of 94 percent. He attributed the difference in appraisals to the fact that assessment techniques had improved.

The overall assessment ratio for the 11 qualified sales from 1988-92 was 110 percent, which means that the assessed value of those homes was generally higher than what the homes sold for.

Rodda said that the last reappraisals of the 446 residential properties was in January 1988 and from that period to December 1992 there

were 151 "conveyances," or title transfers that the tax office recorded. But out of that number, there were only 74 sales and of that number only 11 were "qualified," or sales that the county uses as a yardstick to determine the value of other homes in the community.

In 1992, for example, there were 16 sales, but only three of them were considered "qualified" sales. The average assessment ratio was slightly over 100 percent which means the county was close to being on target.

"In conclusion," Sprinkle said, "the evaluations were not only fair to the neighborhood, but all of the county."

School Official is Rewarded For Work With Students Kids

Bobby Robinson believes that education excellence is achieved through team work, high expectations, a safe environment and goal setting.

Robinson is involved in creating a school of excellence at Southwest Elementary School in Winston-Salem, where she serves as

assistant principal.

And because of her achievements as an administrator and evidence of effective leadership, Robinson has been named "Assistant Principal of the Year" by the North Carolina Association of Educators.

Since become assistant principal at Southwest in 1992, she has implemented curriculum and developed new programs.

Robinson worked with each student in kindergarten through second grade to come up with class goals. She assisted the third-through fifth-graders in setting individual goals. After monitoring their

progress, Robinson is making sure that all students have an opportunity to be rewarded for goals met.

"I hope all 817 students earn a T-shirt for achieving at least two goals this year," said Robinson. "It is only when students succeed that educators succeed."

Robinson is most proud of the programs she created while an assistant principal at Kimberly Park School and Carver High School. She added courses to the Extended Day program at Kimberly Park to help students succeed in their regular classes. This also enhanced the self-esteem of at-risk students, she said.

As coordinator of the Comprehensive High School Program at Carver High, Robinson saw student attendance improve 100 percent, academic performance increase 60 percent, end-of-course test results increase 45 percent and the dropout rate decrease by 4 percent.

"Robinson is a risk-taker, willing to change anything that is not working," said James Wilhelm, director of high schools for Winston-Salem Forsyth County Schools. "She represents the teaching profession at a level that few teachers and administrators ever achieve."

Robinson received the award

last Thursday at the NCAE State Convention Raleigh. She received a \$500 award and a bronze plaque.

Robinson began her career as a teacher at East Forsyth High School, then went on to teach at Carver High. She was an assistant principal at Kimberly Park Alternative School and at Carver High before moving to Southwest Elementary last year.

Robinson received her undergraduate degree from North Carolina Central University and got her master's degree from North Carolina A&T State University. She also attended Appalachian State University.



Bobby Robinson

Margaret Johnson Honored By NCAE

WXII's NewsWatch 12 Reporter and Weekend Anchor Margaret Johnson was recently honored by the North Carolina Association of Educators Inc. for the 1992 "School Bell" Award.

Johnson's series, "Grading Our Schools," aired February 1992 on NewsWatch 12. Her story devoted time and energy to research the variety of ways children were being educated in the Piedmont. According to the NCAE: "The series showed respect for educators and insight into the educational process."

Recipients were selected for accuracy and impartial coverage of public school news. Johnson was the only television recipient in North Carolina. Nine members of various other media, including radio and newspaper, were chosen to receive the award. The awards banquet took place at the Radisson Plaza Hotel in Raleigh last Thursday.

WSSU Offers Planning Workshop

Winston-Salem State University is offering a half-day career planning workshop from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday.

The workshop includes self-assessment, the employment application process, employment laws, interviewing techniques and resumes. The workshop leader is Steve Jones, president of Capri & Associates, career planning consultants.

For additional information about registration and fee, call the Office of Continuing Education at 750-2630.

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