



Concerned Citizens of Franklin County, Inc. • P.O.Box 990 • Eastpoint, Florida 32328 •
Info@abetterfranklin.com

4-2-2015

Ms. Courtney Millender-Dempsey
City Administrator
City of Carrabelle
1001 Gray Avenue
Carrabelle, Florida 32322

Email citycbel@gtcom.net

Dear Ms. Dempsey:

It has been brought to the attention of the Concerned Citizens of Franklin County, Inc. (CCFC) that Commissioner Olivia Massey and husband, Spence Massey, purchased a double-wide mobile home from Clayton Mobile Homes, D/B/A University Homes, in Tallahassee on June 27, 2003 as shown on the attached Indenture. Shortly thereafter, this mobile home was moved onto a one-acre lot at 1399 West 3rd Street in Carrabelle owned (according to the Property Appraiser's records) by Audrey H. Massey. This second mobile home on the same lot as Mayor Messer's existing mobile home appears to have never been added or recorded on the Franklin County Tax Digest or records of the Franklin County Tax Collector. As a consequence, the double-wide mobile home owned by Commissioner Olivia Massey and Spence Massey has never been appraised and property taxes have not been collected for the past twelve years.

The CCFC recently met with the Property Appraiser's office who says they are "fixing" the error. Property values will need to be assessed and property taxes collected back to 2003 or as the law prescribes. The fact that the property in question contains the homestead of two city officials gives additional impetus to what appears to be willful violations by two public officials.

An overarching question is how issues like this happen and how the process of adding taxable properties to the tax digest broke down. All stakeholders in the process must be affirmatively aware when new properties/improvements come into existence and subsequently need to be assessed and taxed. The CCFC contacted Mr. Alan Pierce. Mr. Pierce reported the County did not have evidence of issuing any permit to Olivia and Spence Massey in 2003 for the double wide mobile home located at 1399 West 3rd Street in Carrabelle. Mr. Pierce explained that if a property already has a power pole, then a person could bring a mobile home in and set it up and the Franklin County Building Permit Office would never know about it. However, Mr. Pierce stated the County did not issue permits for Carrabelle between the years of 2004 through 2009 as Carrabelle had its own building permitting office during those years. The County began issuing building permits for Carrabelle again starting in 2010.

Though the Indenture including exhibit "A" (legal description of placement location) was recorded at the Franklin County Clerk's office on July 1, 2003, there may possibly have been a delay in placement of the double wide mobile home on the referenced property until 2004. If so, the City of Carrabelle should have issued the permit in 2004. The CCFC would like to know if the City of Carrabelle has a record on file of the issued building permit to Olivia and Spence Massey for

placement of this mobile home on the one acre lot at 1399 West 3rd Street?

The CCFC is requesting the City of Carrabelle investigate this issue and enforce any zoning violations such as one single-family dwelling per lot. In addition, the CCFC is requesting the City of Carrabelle follow up with the Property Appraiser's office to ensure that back taxes are assessed and collected and that this property is properly taxed moving forward.

An additional issue that needs to be examined is that two City Council members live in two separate houses on a lot zoned for one single-family dwelling. Since only one home can legally exist on the one acre lot in question; there is a legitimate question as to whether a legal residence in the City of Carrabelle was occupied at the time of election by one or both officials. It is certainly an issue of public concern that officials be legally qualified to serve. The City Attorney should review the relevant facts and opine on this matter immediately and in writing.

Since the issue has significant political overtones please provide the undersigned with all relevant actions to be taken within 10 days. I am sure that all parties would like this matter handled in a fair, open and politically neutral manner. All proceedings and process must be made public and especially so due to the parties involved and the long-term financial ramifications that have accrued to the benefit of one or more public officials.

The CCFC has received further information that other mobile homes within the City of Carrabelle are not being taxed at present. (As another example, we believe the chair of the P & Z Committee has an occupied trailer on what is identified and taxed as a 'vacant lot.')

believe that it is the duty and responsibility of the City of Carrabelle to create a methodology and a plan to properly record all properties and their actual usages that are not presently properly recorded on the County Tax Digest. It would then be the responsibility of the City to report these findings to the Property Appraiser's office as it is the role of that office to make sure the City's portion of the County Tax Digest is accurate and complete. The Tax Collector's office only has the responsibility to collect taxes on listed properties and cannot collect property taxes for the County and Cities if properties are not reported. Unequal taxation of land and property (especially elected or appointed individuals) undermines the faith and trust in all elected officials and cannot be allowed to continue.

Sincerely,

Allan J. Feifer
President
Concerned Citizens of Franklin County, Inc.
(850) 349-9145

Enclosures:

Indenture dated June 27, 2003

Ordinance #270 dated July 5, 1999

Copies:

Daniel W. Hartman
Hartman Law Firm, P.A.P.O. Box 10910
Tallahassee, FL 32302

Email

dan@fllegalteam.com

Mayor Wilburn Messer

City of Carrabelle

1001 Gray Avenue

Carrabelle, Florida 32322

Commissioner Frank Mathes

City of Carrabelle

1001 Gray Avenue

Carrabelle, Florida 32322

Commissioner Olivia Massey

City of Carrabelle

1001 Gray Avenue

Carrabelle, Florida 32322

Commissioner Raymond Williams

Mayor Pro Tem

City of Carrabelle

1001 Gray Avenue

Carrabelle, Florida 32322

Email

raywilliams32322@gmail.com

Commissioner Brenda La Paz

City of Carrabelle

1001 Gray Avenue

Carrabelle, Florida 32322

Email

blapaz@live.com