

# AMENDED MINUTES

## TOWN OF BROOKLINE, VT BOARD OF CIVIL AUTHORITY MEETING AND PROPERTY TAX ASSESSMENT APPEAL HEARING

Thursday, July 15, 2025, 5:00 PM

Appellant: Oliver Ames, 872 Grassy Brook Road

### Present:

#### Board of Civil Authority:

Doug Wellman (DW) (Chair)  
Emily Beer (EB) (Vice Chair)  
Marjorie Ray (MR) Town Clerk  
Dot Maggio (DM) JP  
Laurie Nau-Martocci (LNM) JP

#### Listers:

Helen Holt (HH)  
Alyssa Schmidt (AS)  
Al Coonradt (AC) (NEMRC)

#### Appellant:

Oliver Ames (OA)

Doug Wellman calls the meeting to order at 5:00 PM

A property inspection was made by BCA Members on July 8th, 2025 at 2:00 PM.  
Dot Maggio reads the Report of the Inspection Committee.

DW asks if any members of the BCA have questions or need to clarify anything about the report. DM noted that in her original (draft) report that she had measured the amount of the floodline, but that would be fact finding on our part, so that was removed from the final report.

DW asks the Appellant, Oliver Ames, if he has anything else he would like to present or have questions about the report.

Oliver objects to the report in many different ways. He didn't know if we wanted him to go through it and said that he is obviously going to go to the next level with this and didn't want to waste anyone's time.

DW asked Oliver to summarize his objections.

Oliver stated that the condition of the garage, which he carefully pointed out to the inspection committee, and the condition of the corn crib, the committee says nothing about. Oliver feels the report is very selective. Some things are accurate, other things are not.

Oliver says he showed the committee a photo of the water, the water line and the "purported" flooding - he questions why the word purported is used in the report. He asks why there is questioning of the flooding. He says he sees what we are trying to do, but that he has another form of recourse after this.

He appreciates the effort we put into it and he feels really bad about that, but he says our inspection isn't accurate - parts are accurate, but the committee is missing things. He said he can tell that the committee is trying to make it sound like things are okay on the property.

Oliver asks what comes next in terms of this year. He's received this. He's disappointed. He was hoping for a little bit more support given that we are the BCA and represent the town.

DW said that he doesn't think the committee meant to imply that there wasn't flooding. The committee has the picture that shows evidence of flooding, although the committee didn't see the water when it flooded.

DM says that she saw the flooding but she could not use what the Selectboard saw at the time of the flooding in the committee's evaluation. The committee can only use what is presented and not do any fact finding for the appellant.

Oliver thought this was the benefit of using blinders here and that it's our prerogative.

Emily interjected that it is not our prerogative, it's that the committee cannot take anything from outside knowledge into this, nor could we take testimony at the inspection. That's why we say we saw a water line - that's all we can say.

Oliver doesn't understand why things we can see with our own eyes don't get into the report.

Emily refers back to the evidentiary hearing as a time to present evidence, as well as now, in the present hearing. The committee has the photos that have been provided.

Oliver asks if there is anything else in this process here. DW explains that after Oliver's comments, the Listers have a chance to make additional comments.

Oliver says that saying the home is in good condition is not accurate. When water goes into wood or drywall, it damages it. When it happens repeatedly, it damages it. Water, wind, and sun together, twist. He said the committee could see the condition of the garage and the side, and is bending towards the condition of the interior. He had many people come out after the flood and said to tear this down. The empty greenhouse, it's a tear down. What's the condition of something that's fallen apart? Oliver says he struggles with the condition thing and that's that, thank you.

DW thanks Oliver for his comments and asks AI or the Listers if they have any comments they would like to make.

AI Coonradt reiterates that the purpose of the reappraisal is to put everyone in town as close to fair market value as possible at the time of the reappraisal. We are looking at the here and now and what the owner of the property would get if that property were to be put on the open market.

Oliver feels the committee should chew on this problem - it hasn't been addressed - properties on the market, flooding. Discusses comparables on the market for over a year, no one has bought because of flooding. Don't let that clear example go over your head.

DW thanks attendees. The meeting is adjourned, and the BCA enters a deliberative session. A written report will be provided within 15 days.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marjorie Ray, Town Clerk

**Supporting Documents:**  
Report of Inspection Committee

**Video of July 15, 2025 hearing:**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NTjixkj6wNA>

## **Report of the Inspection Committee – Brookline, VT**

**To:** The Board of Civil Authority

**Date:** July 15, 2025

**From:** Inspection Committee - Doug Wellman, Laurie Nau-Martucci, Dot Maggio, Marjorie Ray, and Emily Beer

**RE:** Inspection of Property at - 872 Grassy Brook Road, owned by Oliver Ames

Inspection was made on July 8, 2025 at 2:00 p.m. Property owner Oliver Ames and Emily Ames were present.

The Committee was shown the out-building shed where a car was parked and the attached Cottage. The property owner showed the Inspection Committee water lines inside the Cottage purportedly from flooding during Hurricane Irene and a more recent flood event. Furniture was moved to open up a hatch in the floor where a sump pump was. The property owner allowed the BCA members to access upstairs rooms as well. The Cottage is in good condition and has been nicely renovated to modernize it while keeping original features.

The team then went outside again and entered into the Main House via the empty glass greenhouse. The owner took the BCA members through the home. The Main House has also been very nicely renovated and modernized, while keeping original features wood floors and fireplaces. The BCA viewed some of the Irene repairs which were made after that storm by previous owners. The BCA also observed modifications to the original structure presumably to preserve it, like extra bracing in the basement to support the home. One portion of the basement has a modern concrete foundation. The other portion of the "basement" is constructed of stone (likely original) and has such a low ceiling it is better described as a crawlspace. The low ceiling "basement" has previously flooded, along with all of the mechanicals (oil tank etc.) it contained. The home is now all electric w/ Tesla batteries - no oil tanks are left. The basements regularly flood and are not suitable for living space. Original flooring which was saved remains in the home. The upstairs rooms were also viewed. The home appears sound and to be in good condition. The home is furnished on both the first and second floors.

There is only one septic system for the property which serves both the Cottage and Main House. Two wells are in use. According to the property owner, the wells were not contaminated by flooding. The highest and best use of the property is residential, as it is currently used. While the property has experienced some flooding the overall condition of the two living spaces (the Cottage and Main House) are good with high-end renovations.

The group then walked up onto the artificial berm which was constructed to protect the home from flooding. When functioning, it appears able to collect about 8 acres of water in the lower lying areas, which are primarily field. Flood water drains south via several culverts on the property. The berm is below street grade. The home site level with Grassy Brook Road on approximately 4 acres. Additional sitework has been conducted around the home to protect it

from flooding. The rest of the property's land is up the forested hillside, with a slope that ranges from slight, to moderate, to very steep. The BCA did not go up the hillside to hike the undeveloped portion of the property, as the acreage is vast, the weather was very warm, and portions of the property are steep.

Finally, the group went up onto Grassy Brook Road to see the parcel from a different angle and perspective. Town culverts were noted as well as a nearby pond above the property owned by the Parkers.

The Site visit ended at 3:00 PM