

Stonehouse Wood Sanctuary v. Town of Clinton

Index Nos. 2025-54386

Summary of Matter

Prepared 9-30-25

Summary: 2025 is first year for this matter. Attorney Karen Hagstrom represents the Petitioner. The case involves only one parcel, located on Stonehouse Road (Grid No. 132400-6369-00-634277-0000). The parcel is located in the Rhinebeck Central School District. The School District has not yet appeared in the proceeding. The property is a 12.74 acre rural residence (code 322). The 2025 assessed value is 159,000.

The issue in this case is the denial of the 420-a tax exemption. According to the Petitioner this parcel received the exemption and was wholly exempt for many years until 2025 when it was denied the exemption due to the Petitioner's failure to file a renewal application. The Petitioner is a tax-exempt charitable entity who use the property as a bird sanctuary. The Petitioner cites RPTL Section 420-a (11) which provides that the Petitioner does not have to file a renewal application when "the assessor personally inspections the property and certifies in writing that it satisfies all the requirements for the exemption". The Petition cites that the facilities director, Kathleen Knight, was admitted to Brookmeade, a rehab facility as the reason the renewal application was not filed. The Petitioner claims that because the Town revoked the exemption the burden is on the Town to show why the Petitioner is no longer entitled to it.

The Petition seeks to reinstate the exemption and make the subject parcel wholly exempt. Should the Town not want to entertain a settlement we will need to research the matter and determine if a motion can be made. Alternatively, the Petitioner will likely make a Summary Judgment motion to reinstate the exemption which we will have to respond to.