

**Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency**  
**City/Commercial Advisory Committees**  
Meeting Minutes for November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019  
DoubleTree Hotel – Swift Current Room  
1975 Broad Street, Regina, Saskatchewan

**Commercial Advisory Committee**

**Members**

Audrey Trombley - Committee Chair, SAMA Board Member  
Al Heron (non-voting), SAMA Board Member,  
Urban Sector  
Murray Purcell (non-voting), SAMA Board Member  
Jim Angus (non-voting), SAMA Board Member  
Ian Magdiak, Canadian Property Tax Association  
Reg Hinz, Western Grain Elevator Association Tax Committee  
Kirk Wasylik, Canadian Energy Pipeline Association  
Steven Eady for Robert Rolfe, Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers  
Darwin Collins, Saskatchewan Mining Association  
Susan Quiring, Saskatchewan Assessment Appraisers' Association  
Grace Muzyka, Sask. Association of the Appraisal Institute of Canada  
Ken Patsula, Public Works and Government Services Canada  
Dave Hopkins for Corinne Li, Railway Association of Canada

**Members Absent**

Myron Knafelc (ex officio), SAMA Board Chair  
Vacant, Regina Downtown Business Improvement District  
Rob Lawrence, Association of Saskatchewan Realtors  
Kevin Johnson, Association of Saskatchewan Realtors  
Vacant, Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce  
Jennifer Henshaw, Canadian Federation of Independent Business  
Chris Johnson, Building Owners and Managers Association  
John Hopkins, Regina & District Chamber of Commerce  
Vacant, Saskatchewan Home Builders' Association  
Jim Bence, Saskatchewan Hotel & Hospitality Association  
Barry Wiebe, National Golf Course Owners Association, Sask. Chapter  
Shawn Graham, Inland Terminal Association of Canada

**Observers**

Chad Boyko, Saskatchewan Municipal Board  
Kareen Holtby, Ministry of Economy  
Darcy Huisman, City of Saskatoon  
Vanessa Vaughn, City of Prince Albert  
Michael Kehler, City of Swift Current  
Irwin Blank, SAMA CEO

**Observers Absent**

Ken Dueck, Tourism Saskatchewan  
Norm Magnin, Ministry of Government Relations  
Brenda Hendrickson, City of Moose Jaw  
Rod Wiens, Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities

**Guests Absent**

Evan Wilson, Canadian Wind Energy Association (CANWEA)

**Administration**

Darwin Kanius, Committee Secretary, SAMA  
Todd Treslan, SAMA ASD

**City Advisory Committee**

**Members**

John Wagner, (voting), SAMA Board Member  
Vanessa Vaughan, City of Prince Albert  
Stephan Ward, City of Regina  
Bev Dubois, City of Saskatoon  
Darcy Huisman, City of Saskatoon  
Andrew Workman, Saskatchewan Assessment Appraisers' Association

**Members Absent**

Dawn Luhnig, Committee Chair, SAMA Board Member  
Myron Knafelc (ex officio), SAMA Board Chair  
Jim Puffalt, City of Moose Jaw  
Frazer Tolmie, City of Moose Jaw  
Greg Dionne, City of Prince Albert  
Joel Murray, City of Regina  
Gordon Barnhart, Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association  
Eric Bloch-Hansen, Saskatchewan School Boards Association

**Observers**

Elissa Aitken, Ministry of Government Relations (10:58 am)  
Ron Boechler, Saskatchewan School Boards Association, Trustee  
Deborah Bryden, City of Regina  
Irwin Blank, CEO, SAMA

**Observers Absent**

Jean-Mark Nadeau, Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association,  
Administration  
Brenda Hendrickson, City of Moose Jaw  
Tanice Babecy (Interim), City of Prince Albert  
Mike Voth, City of Saskatoon

**Guests**

Melissa McCloy, Ministry of Government Relations (10:58AM)  
Allan Laird, Ministry of Government Relations (PM)  
Frances Bast, Ministry of Government Relations (PM)

**Administration**

Shaun Cooney, Committee Secretary, SAMA  
Betty Rogers, SAMA ADMIN  
Kevin Groat, SAMA ASD  
Karlo Simonson, SAMA QAD  
Garry Hammett, SAMA TS&P

<b>Agenda Item:</b>	<b>Decision/Resolution:</b>	
1. Call to Order of Joint Session	Audrey Trombley, Chair of the Commercial Advisory Committee called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m.	
2. Opening Remarks	The Committee Chair, Audrey Trombley welcomed the attendees.	
3. Introductions	Introductions by all in attendance.	
4. Approval of the Meeting Agenda	The Agenda was approved.	
	MOTION by Grace Muzyka to approve the Agenda.	<b>Carried</b>
5. Approval of the Meeting Minutes March 27 <sup>th</sup> , 2019	MOTION by Reg Hinz that the minutes for the March 27 <sup>th</sup> , 2019 Joint City/Commercial Advisory Committee Information Session be adopted as circulated.	<b>Carried</b>
6. Business Arising from the Joint Minutes March 27 <sup>th</sup> , 2019.	None reported.	
7. SAMA Update		
7a. CEO Report.	Irwin Blank, SAMA CEO provided a PowerPoint on the CEO's Report.	
	<b><u>Committee Comments</u></b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No questions or comments from the floor.</li> </ul>	
	MOTION by Deb Bryden to receive the CEO report.	<b>Carried</b>
7b. SAMAView and MySAMA Demonstration	Kevin Groat, SAMA (ASD) facilitated a video demonstration.	
	<b><u>Committee Comments</u></b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SKAIC Rep: Can you still receive previous years property profiles?</li> <li>• SAMA: Yes, they will be available.</li> <li>• WGEA Rep: Commercial user accounts are for commercial purposes. Would our company qualify as a public user?</li> <li>• SAMA: Yes. As the owner you will be provided with full access to view your company's assessment information.</li> <li>• PWGS Rep: What is the cost of a subscription?</li> <li>• SAMA: The current cost is \$750 per year. The updated SAMAView will have a \$690 annual fee with free access plus 100 credits. SAMA will introduce commercial light for realtors etc. This option will have a \$250 annual fee with 25 credits for a year. Additional credits may be purchased as needed.</li> <li>• SAMA: The old SAMAView only showed values and very limited information outside of the ratepayer property profiles. Under the new SAMAView there is an option for a multi-user organization to register. Detailed reports will be</li> </ul>	

**Agenda Item:**

**Decision/Resolution:**

available except for industrial properties. These reports can be obtained directly from SAMA if needed.

- PWGS Rep: We would like to see a breakdown of the assessments. For our purposes we need to see a value for each improvement component. Will we need to pay to access this now?
- SAMA: No, as a property owner, access to SAMAView and the reports will be free. Please contact SAMA to be registered as the owner.

MOTION by Grace Muzyka to the receive presentation.

**Carried**

7c. Assessment Services  
Division Report

Todd Treslan, SAMA (ASD) provided a PowerPoint presentation.

**Committee Comments**

- SKAIC Rep: What is the current status at the Court of Appeal?
- SAMA: There has been an unprecedented amount of appeal work at this level which has been challenging for assessors. There have been 21 leave applications during this cycle. Five applications were withdrawn or abandoned; Two applications were denied; Eight applications were granted; Six applications are at the leave stage. One application is at the Court of Queen's Bench. There are two appeals from the 2013 to 2016 assessment cycle that have been heard by the Court. No decisions have been delivered yet.
- PWGS: You are obviously seeing more appeals, what is the cause of this?
- SAMA CEO: There are several reasons. Increasing tax levels account for part of this. The current market levels in some locations are decreasing. When assessments as of the base date are higher than current market levels, it causes owners to question their values, which in turn can trigger increased appeal levels. The Saskatchewan Municipal Board has also ramped up the volume of appeals that they are hearing and deciding on. The increased volume of SMB decisions also leads to an increased level of potential appeals to the next level, which is the Court of Appeal.

MOTION by Ian Magdiak to receive the presentation.

**Carried**

7d. Updates by the other  
Assessment Service  
Providers

**City of Regina Update: Verbal report by Stephan Ward.**

**Assessment Roll**

- The Assessment Roll consists of approximately 86,000 properties.
- The 2020 Assessment Roll is currently open.
- 8,600 Notices were issued on November 8, 2019 (Effective Date January 1, 2017).
- The appeal deadline closes on December 8, 2019.
- Total Value of the 2020 Assessment Base \$42.6 billion. In 2019 it was \$42.2 billion.

**2021 Revaluation**

- Sales information was recently presented to SAAA at their annual conference.

**Agenda Item:**

**Decision/Resolution:**

- High level prediction of assessment trends for the 2021 revaluation compared to the 2017 revaluation:
  - Single family residential - 8%
  - Residential condominium -14%
  - Multi family 4%
  - Industrial 2%
  - Commercial - 2%
- At the November 13, 2019 Revaluation Subcommittee meeting, SAMA and other Assessment Service Providers presented current residential and industrial revaluation models for discussion. They are still working on the commercial models.

**Board of Revision**

- 2019 - 25 properties appealed; no properties outstanding.
- 2018 - 246 appealed; nothing outstanding.

**Appeals to SMB**

- 2019 - 42 appeals; no hearings established.
- 2018 - 47 appeals; two outstanding.
- 2017 - 162 appeals; nothing outstanding.

**Court of Appeal**

- Awaiting a 2016 decision on Consumer Co-op Refinery Limited which involves a land issue. This was heard on October 22, 2019.

**Qualified Sales**

- Although the 2019 sales have not been finalized, it appears the predicted 2019 qualified sales level will be consistent with the 2018 level. There are approximately 3,600 properties.

**Organization Restructure of the Property Assessment Division**

- We have restructured to two main divisions / streams.
- Valuation Division – includes both residential and commercial valuations with a geographical split between the east and west.
- Assessors will have the opportunity to value residential as well as be properly trained in the valuation of commercial properties.
- Research / Appeals Division - division will be responsible for all model research and defense of property valuation through the appeal process.
- The goal is to have the restructure complete and fully operational by the end of January 2020.

**Modernization of TAS – Combined Taxation and Assessment CAMA system**

- The City of Regina’s Tax and Assessment system is antiquated and reaching the end of its life.
- Commencing in January, we will embark on a two and a half year project with the goal of modernizing the current interfaces and implementing new efficiencies into the system.
- The project will consist of a redeveloped user interface – moving away from an outdated Oracle platform towards Microsoft.NET which is an industry standard for web application development.

**Agenda Item:**

**Decision/Resolution:**

- There will be more to report on this in the future.

**City of Saskatoon Update: Verbal Presentation by Darcy Huisman**

**Assessment Roll**

- The 2019 Assessment Roll is pending confirmation while the supplementary assessment roll has yet to be completed.
- The 2020 Assessment Roll is being prepared. There will be approximately 12,000 notices in the mail for 2020. The customer review period is from January 2 to February 3.

**Board of Revision**

- For 2019, 192 appeals were filed, of which 85% were commercial, with the balance being apartments and single-family housing. Approximately 84% of the appeals have professional representation.
- All appeals have been heard with the exception of one outstanding supplemental appeal.
- The 191 appeal results can be broken down as follows:
  - Withdrawn by Appellant 42
  - Agreement to Adjust with the Assessor 26
  - Dismissed before a hearing 2
  - Assessments upheld at the hearing 66
  - Assessments reduced at the hearing 55
- For outstanding appeals to the SMB we have: 51 for 2017, 37 for 2018 and 142 for 2019. There is one outstanding issue at the leave application stage at the Court of Appeal – witness vs. written evidence (i.e. sales verification form).
- We are waiting for the Court of Appeal Decision that was heard on November 6 regarding a Semi-Gross, Gross Rent issue
- The 2017 and 2018 Warehouse leave was granted on a number of issues stemming from Altus' expert.
- The merit hearing is to be determined.

**Completed at the Court of Appeal**

- Apartment 2017 and 2018 Altus appeal. Apartment actual rent issue was denied.

**Permit Volume**

- 13% decrease in new single-family housing permits issued October 2018 to September 2019 from a year ago. The total permit value of new housing permits was approximately \$106 million.
- There was a 17% decrease during the same time frame on new apartment units. The total permit value for apartments in 2019 was about \$45 million.
- There was a 35% decrease in commercial permits, with a total permit value of about \$131 million.
- A notable commercial development (permit value of about \$90 million) is the River Landing project, where a second office building is being built to add to the newly completed hotel, existing office tower and residential condo. There also will be a public plaza on the same parcel.

**Agenda Item:**

**Decision/Resolution:**

City Council approved a tax abatement on the incremental value on the office building and condominium for five years. The tax abatement starts next year.

- There was a 43% increase in new industrial construction permits. The total permit value is approximately \$29 million.

**2021 Revaluation**

- All sales have been verified, and income and expense information for commercial properties has all been entered into the CAMA system, with about 90% cleansed and ready for analysis.
- A residential market neighbourhood review was completed by three external consultants in order to draw new boundaries or confirm existing boundaries. This yielded a reduction in the number of market neighbourhoods from ten to eight.
- All residential, including single family, semi-detached and condominiums modelling will be complete by year end.
- Residential land and Multi Family land have been completed, Commercial land is still in progress.
- Hotels and shopping centre analysis will be complete by year end.
- The retail values will be completed in time for the report to Government Relations. The balance of the commercial properties will be trended.

**Preliminary trends:**

- Residential: - 5%
- Condo: -10%
- Multi Family: 0%
- Commercial: 26% (warehouses down slightly, offices 24% increase, retail about 50%)

**Staffing**

- We are still experiencing a lot of turnover. Currently there are two vacancies within the office - one assessment appraiser and one field assistant (request for info entry, misc. duties)

**City of Prince Albert Update: Verbal presentation by Vanessa Vaughn**

**Appeals**

**2017**

- 91 appeals to the BOR
- 15 appeals to the SMB
- 2 appeals to the COA – waiting on leave decisions

**2018**

- 42 appeals to the BOR
- 19 appeals to the SMB – 12 still waiting to be heard

**2019**

- 27 appeals to the BOR
- 19 appeals to the SMB

Issues under appeal for 2018 and 2019 are similar to the issues to the 2017 CoA so these CoA leave appeals may hold up our SMB appeals for 2018 and 2019.

**Agenda Item:**

**Decision/Resolution:**

Permits

- Permits are down for commercial and residential.
- City Council approved a tax incentive program to help increase growth of residential construction.
- University of Saskatchewan, Prince Albert Campus – Forest Centre is opening in September 2020; there has been more inquiries for potential downtown student housing.

2021 Revaluation

- Residential: -10%
- Residential Condos - 6%
- Multi-Residential: - 1%
- Commercial: - 9 %
  - Looking back at possibly using sales prior to the four-year cycle due to limited amount of sales for each property type and vacant land.
- New website introduced in October 2019 which will allow the ability to edit easier and put more information online for public to access assessment information.
- In April 2020 will be working with our communications department on educating the public and preparing the council and administration on the 2021 Revaluation. This will include the type of information we will be providing online.

Staffing

- All appraiser positions are full. We have a total of four appraisers, one manager and one City Assessor within the Assessment Division.

**City of Swift Current Update: Verbal presentation by Mike Kehler**

2019 Preliminary Roll

- 2019 Swift Current Board of Revision – ten hearings, all dismissed
- 2019 AAC – six property appeals filed, four withdrawn (hotel capitalization issue) and two outstanding related to grain elevators.
- 2019 Assessment Roll confirmed by the SAMA Board in mid-August

Supplemental Assessment

- Maintenance is complete for 2019. Notices will be mailed prior to December 1.

2021 Revaluation

- Sales verification is completed up to January 1, 2019
- Income collection RFI process is ongoing. Initial returns are at approximately 75% (varies by occupancy). Second requests are being mailed as data entry defines missing data.
- Land is complete and entered into CAMA.
- Hotel analysis is ongoing – rationale is the same as the current analysis.

**Agenda Item:**

**Decision/Resolution:**

- CAMA updates are ongoing. Projected completion had been set for September. There are contingency plans for implementation in the event that changes are not available prior to March 2020.
- Trends – residential, multi-residential and commercial are up slightly (3-10%); condo is flat and industrial is down slightly.

**2020 Preliminary Roll**

- Projected to be ready for the second week of January. January 10 is the targeted mail date.

**Saskatchewan Municipal Board Update: Verbal presentation by Chad Boyko**

- In 2019 the most appeals processed in the organization's history - approximately 130 to 140 appeals.
- Case management well underway for 2019. The Board will be caught up by next cycle.
- Diane Ford, who was the Chair for the last seven years, has resigned.
- Chad Boyko is the acting chair. There is no timetable on a replacement.

**Committee Comments**

- No questions from the floor.
- City of Saskatoon and other assessment service providers indicated how they appreciated the efforts to catch up and commended the Board for introducing the video conferencing and the ability to just provide written submissions.
- SMB: I will pass these comments on. Saskatoon is the main one using video conferencing.

MOTION by Ken Patsula to receive all the verbal reports.

**Carried**

**Lunch at 11:58 a.m. reconvened at 12:41 p.m.**

**8: Current Developments**

**8a: 2015 and 2019 Base Year Publication Amendments**

Garry Hammett, SAMA (TS&P) provided a PowerPoint presentation.

**Committee Comments**

- SAMA CEO: The proposed changes do not impact current values but clarifies the narrative and current practice. The last amendment was simply a clerical error that needed attention.
- No questions or comments from the floor

MOTION by Darcy Huisman to receive the report.

**Carried**



**Agenda Item:**

8b. Court of Appeal  
Decision Regarding Oil and  
Gas Tanks

**Decision/Resolution:**

Shaun Cooney, SAMA (TS&P) provided a PowerPoint presentation.

**Committee Comments**

- No questions or comments from the floor.

MOTION by Susan Quiring to receive the report.

**Carried**

8c. 2021 Revaluation -  
Proposed Market Value  
Assessment Handbook  
Amendments

Shaun Cooney, SAMA (TS&P) provided a PowerPoint presentation.

**Committee Comments**

- SKAIC Rep: There is a lot of MRA discussion in the Introduction and I was wondering why. I don't want MRA to be confused with an approach to value. I object to the proposed MRA placement in the Introduction.
- SAMA: Upon review it was determined that a central place (Introduction) to discuss and describe MRA was the best fit. If an edit is required, it's contained in a single place. Just to clarify, MRA is not an approach to value, but a technique to conduct the analysis whether it be for the sales comparison approach or the income approach. We appreciate the feedback and will consider your objection and determine if this section requires some revisions to the narrative.

MOTION by Susan Quiring to receive the report.

**Carried**

8d: 2021 Revaluation  
Planning and  
Assessment Trends

Garry Hammett, SAMA (TS&P) provided a PowerPoint presentation.

**Committee Comments**

- CAPP Rep: Is the level of detail captured in the heavy industrial trends?
- SAMA: Yes, the detailed costs have been provided by the stakeholders and the resulting model has been loaded into the CAMA. For 2021 the exact cost model is reflected in the trend analysis.
- PWGS Rep: What's the reason for so many agricultural sales?
- SAMA CEO: High demand and relatively low prices compared to other provinces.
- PWGS Rep: Historically it's higher values on the west side of the province versus the east side.
- SAMA CEO: That's true, but the model is a provincial average with no east to west market split.

MOTION by Andrew Workman to receive the report.

**Carried**

8e: Government Relations  
– Praxis Report on Boards  
of Revision in  
Saskatchewan

Melissa McCloy, Government Relations (GR) provided a PowerPoint presentation.

- Principles - Foundation for Change.
  - Reduce potential bias in decision making at the Boards of Revision.
  - Efficiency, timeliness, consistency.
  - Establishing a provincial (default) Board of Revision.

**Agenda Item:**

**Decision/Resolution:**

- Maintain municipal autonomy to choose their own Board of Revision.
- Provincial Registrar group
  - One point of contact
  - Decide sufficient grounds
  - Perfect grounds
  - Refer appeals through agreements to adjust
  - Batch similar appeals
  - Route appeals to correct Board of Revision
- Establish standards for Boards of Revision and ensure standards are met.
- Includes an oversight function.
- Will be creating a steering committee (SUMA, SARM, RMAA, UMAAS).
- Will use reference groups to address the model design.
- Training will be implemented by the end of June 2020.
- The system will be in place by January 1, 2023, which will allow two years to test the system before the 2025 revaluation.

**Committee Comments**

- City of Saskatoon: How does the Registrar work on the appeals?
- GR: Registrar will collect the appeals and review the grounds. From there, the appeals would be sent to the secretary of the municipal or the provincial board. Regina and Saskatoon would send appeals through this registrar group as well.
- City of Swift Current: Do you expect a delay in this process?
- GR: No, there should be a flow because of the staggering of assessment rolls.
- SAMA CEO: This is an impressive undertaking for Government Relations.
- SAMA Board Member: The Boards of Revision are not a rural municipality problem. However, the Registrar system is a good idea. I think you are on the right track, especially coming from the rural perspective.

MOTION by Vanessa Vaughn to receive the report.

**Carried**

8f: Proposed assessment related amendments to the Municipal Acts

Allan Laird, Government Relations (GR) provided a PowerPoint presentation

- Bill #194 was introduced into the legislature yesterday under the *Misc. Statutes Interpretation Act. The Cities Act, The Municipalities Act, The Northern Municipalities Act, 2010* are being amended.
  - Only need to keep rolls for ten years
  - Railway companies required to provide assessor with certified statements
  - Notify property owner of appeal decisions and appeal agreements
  - Shut in well amendment to correct the referenced reporting date
  - Municipal employees disallowed from sitting on Boards of Revision
  - Can use electronic sending of notices and or can use newspaper as primary source
  - Board of Revision must provide all of its materials within 14 days of the SMB's request
  - Regulations for buildings, travel trailers and RPE
  - Revisions for assessment and resource production rules and definitions
  - Thresholds for simplified appeals
  - Application of historic appeal decisions on roll when further appealed

**Agenda Item:**

**Decision/Resolution:**

- Boards of Revision to be appointed when assessment roll is prepared
- Timelines set at 180 days for appeal decisions for all municipalities
- Contact information and fees to be provided on notices of appeal
- Notify appellant of deficiencies in notice of appeal

**Committee Comments**

- SAMA CEO: Regarding the exemption in unorganized hamlets. Will this exclude regular country residential properties in the RM?
  - GR: Yes.
  - SKAIC Rep: Can you explain the background on this amendment?
  - GR: Residential exemption that is available to residential property owners who live outside of organized or unorganized hamlets in RM's. The legislative provision allows these property owners to use the taxable assessment for any agricultural land they own or lease in the municipality to exempt that amount of the taxable assessment on their residence.
  - Board Member: This includes land in adjacent RMs as well.
- City of Swift Current: Regarding the 14 days to provide information to SMB. Is there a penalty if they do not provide this?
- GR: All of the timelines are somewhat problematic. We know we may need to review this. Hopefully this will help make improvements.
- City of Swift Current: Will electronic mailing apply to notice of appeals?
- GR: This can be defined in regulations at a later date.
- General: Can we get copies of the two presentations?
- GR: Yes.

MOTION by Reg Hinz to receive the report.

**Carried**

9a. Next Scheduled  
City/Commercial  
Advisory Committee  
Meeting

The next City and Commercial Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at a site to be determined in Regina.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned by Grace Muzyka at 2:09 p.m.



Darwin Kanius  
Commercial Advisory Committee, Secretary



Shaun Cooney  
City Advisory Committee, Secretary