

CNY Housing Market Becoming a More Level Playing Field for Sellers

By Richard H. Sargent

For years, Central New York home sellers have endured a “buyer’s market,” where prospective home purchasers wielded substantial clout in negotiations over sales prices and key components of purchase agreements. While the reign of the buyer’s market is not over, housing trends in Central New York suggest the playing field could be leveling out, providing important opportunities for sellers.

According to the Greater Syracuse Association of Realtors’ July housing sales report , closed home sales for the first seven months of 2012 were up 12 percent at 3,419 and the median sales price for the same period rose 2.4 percent to \$125,000. While most sellers would find these statistics to be encouraging, there are other numbers that are equally exciting and that have largely been overlooked.

The region’s inventory of homes for sale was far below its recent normal level for July. Only 4,724 homes were for sale by then, down 22.1 percent from a year earlier. Even the month’s supply of inventory was down 32 percent over the year at 8.5. Usually, this rate has hovered around 12 in recent summers.

Keep in mind: spring and summer are traditionally prime selling seasons and over the prior three years housing inventories by July or August were at peaks levels. This July, however, inventories are at winter lows. These lower housing inventory statistics suggest that a different demand-and-supply dynamic is playing out in the 12-county greater Syracuse region. Right now, it is looking like there are more buyers and fewer homes to buy.

So long as this trend continues, Central New York home sellers, with the help of their real estate law attorneys, may want to consider holding firmer to certain purchase agreement terms, timelines, pre-sale renovations, repair credits, and included personal property, such as washers and dryers. Sellers, however, should be careful about driving too hard bargains as though it was 2005.

Do not forget, by July houses were sitting on the market for an average 85 days — far above the traditional sitting period for the month. That means buyers may be spending more time shopping. But, to the benefit of sellers, there are fewer homes to browse, at least for the time being.

Richard H. Sargent

is a partner for the full-service law firm of Tully Rinckey PLLC in Syracuse. He concentrates his practice on civil litigation, estate planning, and real estate law. Dick can be contacted at rhsargent@1888Law4Life.com

or 1-888-Law-4-Life.

