

Mary Ann Jacob, Chair
Phil Carroll, Vice Chair
Joe Girgasky, Recording Secretary
A. Jeffrey Capeci
Robert Merola
Neil Chaudhary



TOWN OF NEWTOWN

Minutes of the Legislative Council Ordinance Committee DRAFT-DRAFT-DRAFT

The Ordinance Committee met April 11, 2013 at the Newtown High School Lecture Hall. Ordinance Committee Chairman Jacob called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

Present: Ms. Jacob, Mr. Carroll, Mr. Capeci, Mr. Merola, Mr. Chaudhary, Mr. Girgasky, Chief Kehoe

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR 03-12-13: Mr. Capeci made a motion to accept the minutes from Mar. 12, 2013, seconded by Mr. Carroll, all in favor.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Ron Pollard, 5 Point O' Rocks Rd., Newtown – feels we are assembling a solution in search of a problem; mentioned safety statistics referenced at last meeting and posted in minutes; complaints are noise related; nobody has observed inappropriate shooting activity; feels existing CT General Statutes are sufficient.

Aaron Cox, 31 Pond Brook Rd., Newtown – emotions will play a role in this process; most people can't afford designations in military publications; agrees that adult supervision should be required of minors; agrees that safe backstops are needed; thanked all participants. (letter attached)

Eric Poupon, 23 Split Rock Rd., Newtown - mentioned that critical points of discussion are exploding targets, permitting, inspections of ranges, appeals process and time limitations; calls made to PD not recorded fully.

Barbara Richardson, 31 Osborne Hill Rd., SH – wishes that we inspect & permit ranges.

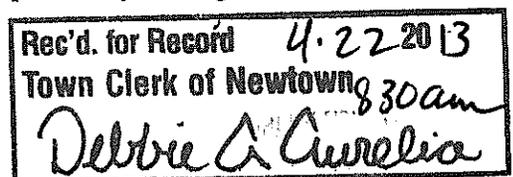
Robert Hutchinson, 8 Split Rock Rd., Newtown – reiterated ranges should be inspected; Chief should be solely responsible for inspections; decisions should be objective; should have an appeals process; should have advisory input; Chief should reference specifications mentioned at previous meeting.

Pete Muckell, 14 Dinglebrook Rd., Newtown – NRA guidelines are reasonable; 550' guideline is not enough.

Frank Huffner, 157 Brushy Hill Rd., Newtown – Pres. Newtown Fish & Game; as landowner does not see target shooting as a problem with appropriate safety measures; questions potential insurance concerns if Chief has additional responsibilities of approvals; would like to see ordinance accommodate young folks; safety is important; surprised to hear that exploding targets are currently allowed.

Andy Buzzi, 38 Obtuse Rd., Newtown – thanked Committee; many comments share commonality; all residents want target shooting to be safe; PD needs tools for enforcement that stop unsafe shooting; use enforcement approach not regulation; many suggestions are expensive; do we wish to infringe on use of an individuals own land?; a resolution is attainable to appease all.

Paul Dagostino, 10 Juniper Rd., Newtown – thanked Committee & participants; happy to find shared ground on issues; agrees with off-hours limits; ensure basic safety; looks for safety & responsibility moving forward.



Lawrence Thompson, 60 Osborne Hill Rd., SH – kids were traumatized by 12/14 event; Newtown is a different place since 12/14; target shooting is a reminder of 12/14.

Jim Ondak, 4 White Oak Farm Rd., Newtown – thanked Committee; the solution to the problem is within this room; the irresponsible people are not in this room; abuse of times and exploding targets are not from people in this room; abuses may affect property values; asked that the process move along.

David Stowe, 15 Patricia La., Newtown – this is a public safety issue not a 2nd Amendment issue; there need to be regulations before they can be enforced.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING:

a. Firearms Ordinance – Ms. Jacob reported that after requesting for a policy crafted by the BOS, the BOS responded that a policy with respect to an ordinance could be difficult to enforce. The BOS suggested legal discussions. BOS also suggested returning with D. Grogins, Chief Kehoe, Animal Control Policy and ordinance for comparison. Chief Kehoe commented that an advisory committee may take years to agree on items and that he may be able to make recommendations for a checklist of items needed for law enforcement such as berms and direction. Different checklists may be needed for long guns, hand guns and various calibers. Few officers will be able to assess environment for safety. There are many variables with regard to these issues. Chief Kehoe offered to discuss with officers that may be able to offer helpful input. The Committee continued to discuss safe practices including safety instruction, 8am to sunset hours, phoning PD in advance, backstops, targets types, rapid fire and penalties. Ms. Jacob then offered to open public participation before moving to Anti-Blight Ordinance discussion.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Jeffrey Purdy, Roxbury – fish & game club member; suggests reading NRA literature; backstops are very important; a projectile leaving your property is a crime.

Ron Pollard, 5 Point O' Rocks Rd., Newtown – asks for possibility of grandfathering since he has been shooting on his property for 20 years and for others living and participating here for long periods of time.

Robert Hutchinson, 8 Split Rock Rd., Newtown – NRA range source book is a good reference; two tables are referenced for rifle & pistol.

Russell Jagoe, 19 Monitor Hill Rd., Newtown – stated a small amount of complaints started discussions; disappointed that the Committee will act on very few people that have a complaint.

Ken Locke, 7 Valley Field Rd. North, SH – time limits will be tough to define; rapid fire should be allowed for training purposes; permits are not needed to buy a long gun; opposes permits for target shooting.

Aaron Cox, 31 Pond Brook Rd., Newtown – agrees that target shooting prior to 8am or 9am may be too early; offered that Sunday may be a little more limited; consider time limits with regard to number of participants; wishes to target shoot with his children.

Eric Poupon, 23 Split Rock Rd., Newtown - heard target shooting on 4 or 5 occasions for 6 to 8 hours each occurrence; these situations need to be shut down.

Bob Kosin, 135 Saw Mill City Rd., Shelton – specific regulation is going to be difficult; range safety is important; almost impossible to address all items in discussion.

Andy Buzzi, 38 Obtuse Rd., Newtown – we have a good start and good comments; encourages the Committee to consider items that are enforceable to promote safe shooting; not in favor of permitting.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING:

b. Anti-Blight Ordinance – The Committee discussed vehicles “no longer suitable for intended use”. URL references to be removed from document. 3.B.1.c to be removed. Discussion to continue next meeting.

The Committee agreed to meet on May 8, 2013, 7:30pm, location to be determined.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

None.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Capeci, seconded by Mr. Girgasky, all in favor. .

Respectfully Submitted,
Joe Girgasky

Attachments:
letter from Aaron Cox

My name is Aaron Cox 31 Pond Brook Rd. Newtown. I apologize in advance if I leave the meeting early tonight. I certainly don't mean any disrespect. I have a cold and don't feel well.

We have been assured that emotions will not play a role in whatever decision is made. That is impossible. All of us here tonight are human, therefore we have emotions. No matter what side, and I hate to use the word side because we are all in this together, but no matter what side you are on, there are emotions involved. If not, would we be here? Beyond that our town has been thrown into the national spotlight, people are watching all of our discussions intently. Because of emotions and because of the scrutiny we are under, now is the time to move carefully, thoughtfully and most importantly act fairly to all of the citizens of our town. While there needs to be change in the current firearms ordinance, the new ordinance needs to be written in such a manner that the common man has the ability to safely shoot on their own property. Both the Brookfield Zoning Regulation and the proposed ordinance from Parents for a Safer Newtown do not offer the common person any chance to shoot, they obviously were written with the intent to stop all recreational shooting. I hope that this is not the message that we want to send to the nation. I hope the message we want to send is that all people have the right to pursue their interests. Some of the reasons these regulations are not workable are: The common person can't afford a new survey of their property to show the shooting range, set backs, etc. They can't afford a fence or worse yet berms all around the shooting range. Most people can't afford to build a new building to contain the noise. Most of us don't own the huge "safety zones" that are designated in the military publications. Neither the Brookfield Regulations nor the proposed ordinance, allow for permission from abutting property owners if the setbacks are too small. In one subsection, while target practicing, one would not be allowed to shoot at moving targets, what about my rubber woodchucks that spin when you shoot them. They move, thus they are illegal?

I agree that time limits need to be established. I would ask that if setbacks are placed in the ordinance, that simple written permission from the abutting property owner could satisfy this requirement. I agree that the property owner

needs to be present, however I would once again ask that if they are not written permission could substitute. I am amenable to a restriction on the number of people shooting at one time. I agree that minors under 18 need to have an adult on the property and minors under 16 need to be in direct adult supervision at all times. I do not believe the town should place a minimum age that a minor needs to be in order shoot. That is strictly a parenting decision. I agree that tannerite should be prohibited, along with shooting at any other exploding substance such as propane tanks. I absolutely agree that a safe backstop needs to be in place, consisting of either manmade or natural features.

Last month I gave facts, facts about how safe target shooting is. I hope they were read and understood. This month I took a different approach. I am simply asking the committee to realize emotions are involved, from all parties. Target shooting is part of my heritage, I am human, I get emotional about my heritage. I am asking that we send a message to the nation that everyone, including shooters, have rights that need to be respected. I am sure that an ordinance that is acceptable to all can be written.

Lastly I need to once again thank the ordinance committee for working so hard on every ordinance. You give up a lot of your time. I'd once again like to thank the Chief , and his department for all they do and have done. And Lastly the townspeople for carrying on an open dialog.