

Meeting Minutes

11 SEPTEMBER 2018 / 7:30 PM / Veterans' Hall @ Pembroke Town Hall

ATTENDEES

Gordon Martin[GM] (Chairman), Rob Adams[RA] (Clerk), Gary Fine[GF] (Board of Health Member), with Two (2) Vacancies

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

Call To Order @ 1933

- GM called the meeting to order

Accepting Minutes from 06 September 2018 Meeting

- RA motioned to accept the minutes as is
- GM seconded
- Motion passed with GF abstaining
- GF made a point of order that he only read the unproofed copy, not the final document

Discussion regarding "The Deadly Plastic Bag: Are we Overreacting?" article written by Brandon Gulnick

- GF states he made copies that he neglected to bring with him
- RA states he did not receive a copy of the article and was unable to read it
- GM suggests we table the topic till next week

Mission Statement

- GM, RA and GF passed to each member their respective proposed mission statements
- RA read his proposal
- GF read his proposal noting RA's held a customary brevity, whilst his was more lengthy

- GM read his proposal
- GM noted we needed to all read each others' proposals and rejoin the discussion next week
- GF asked RA where he obtained elements of his proposal
- RA noted each of the three (3) elements in his proposal were enacted by either surrounding towns or by the majority of municipalities in the State
- GM stated he doesn't believe those elements need to be in a mission statement, but in the bylaw itself
- RA responded that it is important the Subcommittee's Mission Statement (MS) embrace the Citizens' Petition (CP) article for the next Town Meeting, or any subsequent "legislation" that proposes a plastic bag ban
- GM inquired whether the MS should support the CP "with or without amendments?"
- RA responded: "Either" as it is important to enact a ban of plastic bags, whether or not the CP is best possible article
- GM and GF both stated that they did not understand the full meaning of RA's proposed MS' first sentence
- GF noted he is 100% opposed to supporting the CP but would consider signing onto the Subcommittee supporting some future article
- RA stated the measurement specified for reusable bags is something he could drop
- GM again asked GF whether he could support the CP, GF stated "No."
- GM suggested we again look at all three (3) proposals offline and rejoin the discussion during the next meeting trying to achieve "a final draft."
- RA and GF discussed the commonalities between GM and RA's proposed MS's
- GM stated his reluctance to support the CP is the evidence of "considerable wiggle room" in the article
- GM discussed the "problem being it allows for synthetic fibers to be blended" in what constitutes a reusable bag
- GM stated "Remember last week I questioned whether I supported the [CP] bylaw?" and went on to explain he is now with GF in not supporting the CP due to its allowance of synthetic fibers in reusable bags. "I am now with Gary [Fine], I am not for the Citizen's [Petition] Bylaw [article]."
- GM stated allowing synthetic fibers in a reusable bag is "...a bad idea."

- GM “It is not necessary to blend a reusable cloth bag with synthetic materials, synthetic fibers.”
- GM noted that while the CP does achieve banning plastic bags it contains a fatal flaw in allowing synthetic fibers in reusable bags, and then passed around an article “The Dangers of Synthetic Fibers and Fabrics on the Environment” published by SuperEgoClothiers.com // Superego LLC
- GM went on to state that a number of communities have sought to address the environmental impact of the synthetic fiber industry by sourcing out reusable bags made wholly of non-synthetic materials, finding ample choices of sources
- GF asked “In Massachusetts?” GM “Yes.”
- GM can no longer support the CP article because of this element
- RA “Isn’t the use of synthetic fibers a separate issue?” GM “No.”
- RA “The purpose of the subcommittee is to...” discuss and determine the feasibility/infeasibility of a plastic bag ban. But, the issue of synthetic fibers’ environmental impact seems outside this purview.
- GF “I think your missing the point” that GM cannot support the CP because of this element. “He cannot support it as currently written.”
- GM “We do not want to pass a plastic bag ban that doesn’t cover all the concerns.”
- RA argued “Why not introduce an amendment that addressed this fatal flaw?” rather than not support the CP at all
- GM noted other deficiencies in the CP, e.g. it allows glossies/waxed paper bags that “are very difficult to recycle.”
- GM “And it doesn’t say anything about a lot of heavy ink.”
- GM “It doesn’t go far enough. I can give you more.”
- GM “The bottom line is there is one (1) major flaw and three (3) other serious flaws.”
- RA “Let’s talk hard-tack politics. He’s not willing to get behind this [the CP] at all. Why not get me on board? Why not get my support ? Because then we could potentially have a plastic bag ban rather than making the perfect the enemy of good... ?”
- GM “I don’t want to introduce another toxic element in with what we’re trying to do here.”
- GF noted that the Board of Health will vote for or against “favourable action” with what the Subcommittee recommends.
- RA and GF then discussed possible votes of the Board of Health members

- GM proposed to read the article (i.e. “The Dangers of Synthetic...”) and discuss next week
- GF discussed the necessity of “public buy-in for any article that would undoubtedly affect each and every member of the Town”
- GF “It’s not the way to do it.”

Update on Filling The Subcommittee’s Two (2) Vacancies

- GM states he would like to reach out “to the Citizens’ Group” by trying to get some contacts from Sabrina Chilcott
- RA thought it would be hard getting any response given GF’s effort and lack of response that the Synthetic Fiber issue might be a potential bridge to get their response
- RA “I think this [Synthetic Fiber issue] is something that might potentially resonate at least with a few of the members that I know”
- GM “I respect every one of them for having strong feelings about something that is a problem... and going out and trying to solve the problem.”
- GM mused that maybe the Board of Health and the CP Group might come to Town Meeting with an amendment, together, that addressed the concerns he has for the CP.
- GM noted there isn’t enough time to get the business community’s buy-in
- GM and GF talked about what the discussion would entail between the CP Group and the Subcommittee with GM stating perhaps arriving at an amendment that dealt with the Synthetic Fiber issue amongst the other problems
- GF stated “I oppose that 100%.”
- RA stated “I wholeheartedly support that.”

Updating Board of Health

- GF notes that GM is very welcome to come himself and update the Board, “It doesn’t have to be me.”
- Discussion of meeting dates

New Business

- RA “strongly encourage you” to reach out to the business community, noting “time is of the essence.”

- GF “How can we reach out to the business community on a ban, on an article that isn’t even our’s ?”
- RA “I think it’s important to find out where they’re at” on the issue
- GM “So not informing them on anything but asking them question about what are your thoughts about a possible plastic bag ban ?”
- RA “Yes, I think you’d be surprised about the inroads that you would make. I think you’d be surprised by the communication that would happen...”
- GF and GM talked about Pembroke House of Pizza
- GF “Rob I’m going to make a comment...I’m not comfortable with the path and the views that you express. I disagree with them completely... I feel you are being very strategic in trying to move the [Sub]committee in any way shape or form to try and get the CP passed at this coming Town Meeting. Although it was never written in stone, the spirit of putting this group together was not necessarily oppose or counter-attack -- this was, what I thought, a ‘forward thinking’ committee about looking to the future because maybe we, as a group, didn’t support how quickly the CP Group was moving.”
- RA “I think it’s important to get behind the Ban because it is a good thing. I think it’s important to look forward and to think about where the ban should be -- and getting the business community behind it as well -- because it’s not set in stone. No bylaw that passes is set in stone. It can be amended. It can be adjusted. It can be enhanced. It can be reigned in. And I think that is partly why we’re sitting here.”
- GM concluded “I agree with you [RA] and I agree with you [GF]. I think you both bring in some really good points. But, me personally, I want to get behind a ‘bag ban’ -- I really do -- because I know a lot about the problem. And I know there is a major problem with [plastic] bags. I want to support it, but I cannot support the Citizens’ Bag Ban without amendments, especially the major flaw, the fatal flaw, I pointed out to you [RA]. I cannot get behind that...I want to see a bag ban, but I don’t want to see the Citizens’ Bag Ban bylaw go through as is. No way...Bottom line is amendments need to be made.”

Next Meeting Date

- GM “Are we all good with next Tuesday at 730[pm] ?”
- All concurred

Motion to Adjourn @ 2033

- GF motioned to adjourn the meeting
- RA seconded
- Motion unanimously passed