

MEETING MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING
Easton Board of Selectmen
September 12, 2018 – 5:45 p.m.
Town Hall Conference Room A

Adam Dunsby called the meeting to order at 5:49 p.m.

Present: Adam Dunsby, Robert Lessler and Kristi Sogofsky

1. Kristi Sogofsky moved to approve the minutes of the Easton Board of Selectmen Meeting of September 6, 2018. Robert Lessler seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
2. Two members of the public commented on South Park Property and the proposed ordinance.
3. Robert Lessler moved to approve the following tax refunds as recommended by Krista Kot, Tax Collector: 1. BMW FINANCIAL SERVICES NA LLC - \$298.50; 2. BMW FINANCIAL SERVICES NA LLC - \$645.12; 3. BMW FINANCIAL SERVICES NA LLC - \$493.76; 4. MARK MCGOWEN - \$275.45; 5. DOUGLAS & MAUREEN POLITI - \$276.00. Kristi Sogofsky seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
4. Kristi Sogofsky moved to accept the resignation of Kirsten Ceva as a member of the Park and Recreation Commission with thanks for her many years of service. Robert Lessler seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
5. Adam Dunsby began the discussion on the petition for Town Meeting recapping the Town Clerk's letter dated August 31, 2018 confirming the required accepted signatures. The legal opinion from Ira Bloom of Berchem Moses was summarized. (see attached) Robert Lessler and Kristi Sogofsky agreed that a Town Meeting should be called.

Robert Lessler gave the following comments regarding the proposed ordinance: broad public policy should never be decided based on the passions of a select group on a specific situation in fact, that is why Easton has elected and appointed officials who can think deeply and with depth of field of all sides of issues and who are charged with the duty following the regulations already in place by C.G.S. Section 7-163e encouraging input through public hearing not requiring a town meeting. This proposed ordinance would add another layer of government in an already regulated area and would mandate that relatively minor issues continuously go to town meetings which would result in wasting time and expense as town meetings have historically had poor attendance. The thoughtful intent of C.G.S. Section 7-163e is that the Board of Selectmen solicit and receive public input but that they should then exercise their sound discretion on any sale or lease. Having this proposed ordinance in place will make it very difficult to renew or lease space to potential tenants fearing the town meeting process. He also stated that this is not a smart proposal and would be advocating for its defeat at the town meeting.

Kristi Sogofsky echoed what Robert Lessler stated and also feels that this proposed ordinance would add an extra layer of approval to many issues that would not necessarily warrant town meeting approval. This would also impact the frequency of town meetings which would impact the level of participation from town residents. While understanding the concerns for the South Park Property, she feels this issue can be addressed separately and will be speaking out against the proposed ordinance.

Adam Dunsby stated that state law already provides for significant public input for the disposition of real property with the requirements of P&Z review and reporting (8-24) and the public hearing prior to any transaction (7-163). The proposed ordinance is cumbersome and will interfere with the day to day operations of the town. There is a possibility of multiple town meetings for routine matters. Most people would rather pay taxes and have their elected officials handle the day to day operations. Potential lessees, lessors, buyers and sellers will be reluctant to work with Easton because of the uncertainty this proposed ordinance will have. Organizations such as the boards of education and the Historical Society who lease space from the town in addition to the Park and Rec Commission who lease fields and facilities to outside groups could all have potential adverse consequences resulting from this proposed ordinance. Adam went on to say that all meaningful expenditures go through the Board of Finance and are voted on at the budget referendum, so this ordinance is redundant for acquisitions. Elections are held every two years and it is much more efficient for the town to elect people to manage properly the town's property holdings rather than multiple town meetings every time the town engages in a small transaction of real property. As he felt four years ago, he doesn't support this proposed ordinance.

Robert Lessler moved to warn a Special Town Meeting on Monday, September 24, 2018, 7:00 p.m. at the Samuel Staples Elementary School, 515 Morehouse Road, Easton, to:

1. Discuss and possible action on a proposed ordinance submitted by petition as follows: "The Town shall not acquire any real property by sale, lease or otherwise, nor shall it dispose of any real property owned by the Town, by sale, lease or otherwise without the proper approval of the Town Meeting, its legislative body; except this ordinance shall not apply to real property with a fair market value of less than Ten Thousand (\$10,000.00) Dollars, nor to lease of duration of one (1) year or less or of total lease payments totaling less than \$10,000.00, nor to any real property acquired by tax foreclosure."
2. Adjournment.

Kristi Sogofsky seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

6. No board member comment.
7. Kristi Sogofsky moved to adjourn at 6:20 p.m. Robert Lessler seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

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