

March 24, 2014

MOTIONS AND MINUTES

Easton Town Meeting

March 24, 2014 – 7:00 p.m.

Samuel Staples Elementary School, 515 Morehouse Road, Easton

Present:

Adam W. Dunsby, First Selectman; Scott Centrella, Selectman; Robert Lessler, Selectman; Christine Halloran, Town Clerk

Attendees:

Over 400 members of the public

The First Selectman convened the meeting at 7:06 p.m.

The First Selectman asked for a motion to appoint a Moderator. Ray Martin nominated Bill Kupinse. The motion was seconded. The nomination was approved by unanimous voice vote.

The Moderator called upon the Town Clerk to read the call of the meeting. A copy is attached. The Moderator then proceeded with the agenda items.

Item 1: Discuss and take possible action on a proposed ordinance submitted by petition as follows: “The Town shall neither acquire, lend, borrow, lease, nor dispose of any real Town property by any means whatsoever without the prior express approval of its legislative body, the Town Meeting.”

MOTION:

The Moderator called for a motion to adopt the ordinance as presented. A resident moved. Gowen Dacey (who drafted the original proposed ordinance) moved to change the wording of the proposed ordinance to read as follows: “The Town shall not acquire, sell, lease nor dispose of any Town real property by any means whatsoever without the prior approval of its legislative body, the Town Meeting, except this shall not apply to acquisitions or sales less than \$10,000, leases less than one year or less than \$10,000 total lease payments, or properties acquired by foreclosure.” The motion was seconded.

Chris Miles, Easton resident, gave a brief visual presentation on behalf of himself in favor of the proposed ordinance as amended. He commented on the simplicity of the ordinance; instead of having a hearing on town matters, the town should take a vote. Mr. Miles commented that his belief was that the ordinance is only relating to significant matters and major pieces of property. There has been no problem in the past. This is sensible, good government.

Town Officials Comment:

Adam Dunsby commented that this is a bad ordinance the town does not need and encourages the town to vote against it. Many of the people in town may not understand the implications of this ordinance. The proposed ordinance was presented 19 days ago to the town with no prior attempt at a public dialogue for an ordinance that has significant implications on how the town operates. The ordinance contains legal uncertainty with no problem that it solves. It will be expensive and burdensome for the town to deal with minor real property transactions and leases at a town meeting. Mr. Dunsby urges the town to vote no on this ordinance and any amendments.

Robert Lessler fully concurs with Mr. Dunsby's comments and agrees that this ordinance is unnecessary when it deals with purchases which already go to a Town Meeting. The proposed ordinance is overbroad and will touch on the work of conservation and planning and zoning issues going forward. The fees for a Town Meeting are approximately \$800 per meeting to coordinate. Mr. Lessler urges residents to vote against this proposed ordinance as amended.

Public Comment:

Over 20 residents commented on the proposed ordinance and amendment.

After lengthy public and town officials' comments, a resident requested a "Call the Question" signifying a motion for a stop to the discussion and a movement to a vote on the amendment and the ordinance as amended or not. The Moderator indicated that "aye" signifies no further discussion, and "nay" signifies continuing the discussion regarding the proposed ordinance.

MOTION:

The Moderator called for a motion to vote on the "Call to Question." The "aye" wins. Motion carried overwhelmingly by voice vote. No further public comment or questions.

MOTION:

The Moderator called for a motion to vote on the amendment to the ordinance. The "nay" wins. Motion carried overwhelmingly by voice vote.

MOTION:

The Moderator called for a motion to vote on the ordinance as proposed. The "nay" wins. Motion carried overwhelmingly by voice vote.

Item 2: Adjournment

Bill Kupinse called to adjourn the meeting. Ray Martin moved. The motion was seconded. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote, and the meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Christine Halloran, Easton Town Clerk