

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



TOWN OF NEWTOWN

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

The Ordinance Committee met March 12, 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,

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Vincent Battaglia, 209 Banks Rd., Easton – the group that had caused the noise concerns in Newtown had relocated to Easton and has disbanded; reasonable regulations should be offered or matter dropped

Aaron Cox, 33 Pond Brook Rd., Newtown – thanked the Ordinance Committee and Chief for participation; does not believe in emotional decisions; explained a target shooting training he shared with his daughter; referenced several statistics pointing to target shooting as a safe sport; (letter attached)

Michael Roller, 6 Finchwood Dr., Trumbull - VP of Pequot Fish & Game; horrified by event of 12/14; club suspended shooting activities as a courtesy; supports hunting & fishing; members are from wide range of backgrounds; opposes all ordinances not in alignment with CT General Statures.

Robert Hutchinson, 8 Split Rock Rd., Newtown – suggests 500' rule apply to target shooting; has residential target shooters in his neighborhood; stated hunters fire 1 or 2 rounds while target shooters fire many; target shooters not required to have a licenses; thinks residential target shooting should be done on “permitted” ranges if OK'd by Chief of Police; Mr. Hutchinson and “Parents for a Safer Newtown” offered references to NRA, Dept. of Army and Dept. of Air Force Engineering regarding target shooting ranges. (document attached)

Miranda Pachiana, 21 Gelding Hill Rd., Sandy Hook – past summer woke to shooting at 5am; thinks AR15 should not be allowed for recreational use; tannerite should not be used; wants target shooting limited to approved ranges approved by town.

Andy Buzzi, 38 Obtuse Rd., Newtown – thanked Ordinance Committee; tragedy prevents objective discussion due to high levels of emotion; the right to use personal property, legally, is at the core of topic; firearms accidents are at historically low levels; member Fairfield County Fish & Game Club; Mr Buzzi asked if the Committee would accept a show of hands (possibly in lieu of all attendees participating in public comment) from individuals supporting his thoughts, most attendees raised a hand. (letter attached)

Vincent Vinatelli, 7 Alder La., Sandy Hook – asked Committee not to take recent events to make irrational decisions; direction of target shooting should also be considered

Lois Barber, 33 Zoar Rd., Sandy Hook – heard many shots over summer; 500' is not enough.

David Ackert, 6 Cider Mill Rd., Sandy Hook - stated that this is wrong time for discussion; neighbor vs. neighbor should not be; we should be coming together; phone calls have sufficed to resolve issues with neighbors; 500' is not enough; only BB or Airsoft type shooting should be allowed.

Russ Anderson, 5 Merlin La., Newtown – lived near two fish & game clubs both good neighbors; fish & game clubs have structured shooting; target shooting by a former neighbor seemed to be a safety issue and a noise nuisance; environmental issues may exist.

Luciana Dellavera, 21 Split Rock Rd., Newtown – recreational shooting has increased in past 2 years; heard a man was hit in hand by stray bullet; 500' is not enough; consider (1) approved private ranges, (2) allow PD to enforce

Eric Poupon, 23 Split Rock Rd., Newtown - neighbors shoot recreationally for 6 to 8 hours; past 2 years have shown an increase in recreational shooting; hiking, horseback riding should be allowed to be conducted safely; consider (1) prohibit weapons with guidelines for an approved range, (2) allow PD to enforce, not neighbor vs. neighbor, (3) increase penalties

Susan Muir, 11 Sweet Meadow Rd., Newtown – not looking for an end to recreational shooting, wants safer guidelines; house inspections were required during home addition, this should be applied to recreational shooting; put safety first.

Peg Dimmik, Split Rock Rd., Newtown – noticed frequent shooting over past few years; not against hunting, shooting, firearms would like to feel safer with recreational shooting; requests distance increase from 500' to industry standards; enable PD to take enforcement.

Dom Uliano, 34 Swamp Rd., Newtown – member Fairfield County Fish & Game since 1984 no incidents (accidents); recent tragedy has brought emotions to this topic.

Jim Ondak, 4 White Oak Farm Rd., Newtown – has shooters in neighborhood with no back drop; tannerite is being used; the ranges that are not responsible people need regulation.

Po Murry., 38 Charter Ridge., Sandy Hook – 20 year old ordinance needs to be updated; if PD asked for assistance lets provide a common sense solution; wants to put topic to 16,000 Newtown voters.

David Stowe, 15 Patricia La., Newtown – population up 38% since 1991, date of last ordinance update; wishes a solution for everyone can be found; safe use is desired.

Elmer E. Cox, 31 Pond Brook Rd., Newtown – hunted & fished since 1935 on property; is a certified instructor for handgun, rifle and black powder safety courses; would like clarification of 500' suggestion, 500' to neighbors? 500' to own property?; eliminate exploding target use; maybe safety training should apply to all shooting; follow basic safety; work together to enforce and clarify existing rules; (letter attached)

Kelly Kennedy, 11 Split Rock Rd., Newtown – some shooting noticed when 1st moved in, increased in past years; 500' is inadequate; private ranges should be inspected & permitted.

Dick Giannettino, 18 Chestnut Hill Rd., Sandy Hook – objects to outlawing weekend shooting; clarified that an AR15 is not an assault weapon; does not understand how anyone can state that they “hear” semi-automatic weapons without witnessing; invited anyone interested in learning more about firearms to visit him at his store (Shooter's, New Milford)

Bill Stevens, 139 Huntingtown Rd., Newtown – would like people to be able to resolve issues with neighbors with a phone call.

Paul Dagostino, 10 Juniper Rd., Newtown – encouraged by discussion; suggests we draw on our wealth of wisdom to develop safety and maintain freedom; it's time to update the ordinance.

Donna Rob, 128 Huntingtown Rd., Newtown – since 1968 there has been no documented incidents in town; 500' is successful; mentioned HB 6595 being considered in Hartford.

Terry Hennessy, 37 Eden Hill, Newtown – wants to see compromise of safety and shooting; went horseback riding and target shooters seemed to scare horse preventing return; mentioned 6 to 8 hours of target shooting noticed.

Ken Locke, 7 Valley Field Rd. North, Sandy Hook – was hoping to see final draft by now; Chief had no info of anyone being shot; please stick to facts about target shooting; likes 500' rule.

Amy Cox, 33 Pond Brook Rd., Newtown – participates in target shooting and had neighbors that participate as well; 500' guide is sufficient; direction of shooting is important; promote safe back stops and gun handling; expanding 500' distance is not needed.

Gary Elliot, Huntington – believes the 500' regulation in hunting laws is sufficient; ordinance should be geared to address violations not penalize law abiding citizens.

Paul Adonyea, 40 Old Bethel Rd., Newtown – semi-automatic firearms have been in use for over 100 years; has a personal range; uses a .22 for nuisance animals.

Patricia Clark, 25 Point O' Rocks Rd., Newtown – former kennel owner is familiar with noise; no restrictions on persons who hunt nor nuisance pest control; need a better way to address public noise nuisance.

George Spakowski, 164 Berkshire Rd., Sandy Hook – agrees with many comments made this evening; increasing distance from 500' would require more than 20 acres that most persons don't have; requested the Committee look into possibilities for the Town to offer property for target shooting.

Gary Linjengren, 15 Split Rock Rd., Newtown – heard 500' to 1000' to 2000' suggestions but CT hunting states 500'; town laws will not overshadow CT or federal laws.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR 11-14-12: Mr. Capeci made a motion to accept the minutes from Nov. 14, 2012, seconded by Mr. Girgasky, all in favor except Mr. Merola & Mr. Chaudhary who abstained.

ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR: Mr. Merola made a motion to nominate Mr. Carroll for the Vice Chair position vacated by Mr. Bolinsky, seconded by Mr. Capeci, all in favor.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING:

a. Firearms Ordinance – Ms. Jacob responded that the Charter would not allow for a suggested town wide vote on this topic. Ms. Jacob offered that the Committee seek input from the Selectmen regarding direction for possible use of a “policy” in conjunction with the ordinance. **Mr. Merola made a motion to ask for policy input from Selectmen, seconded by Mr. Carroll, all in favor.** Mr. Merola noted that “one size may not fit all” with regard to policy/ordinance. Mr. Capeci asked for public comments regarding use and necessity of tannerite. An attendee explained it was a mixture of two items that explode when struck; nobody spoke to need. Mr. Girgasky suggested that traditional targets (paper, cardboard, etc.) (with appropriate direction and back stop) be used; no exploding targets and that nuisance animal control should be allowed. Mr. Carroll offered that this ordinance pertain to target shooting only. After asking for comment from local fish & game club attendees Mr. Capeci suggested time for target shooting be conducted from dawn until dusk. Ms. Jacob asked the Committee to continue refining items that offer increased safety with regard to target shooting and look forward to info from Selectmen regarding possible “policy” at next meeting.

b. Anti-Blight Ordinance – With the departure of Mr. Bolinsky, Ms. Jacob asked if Mr. Chaudhary would take the lead on the Anti-blight, Mr. Chaudhary agreed.

The Committee agreed to meet on April 11, 2013, 7:30pm, location to be determined.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Aaron Cox, 33 Pond Brook Rd., Newtown – agrees that if landowner not present during target shooting that participant(s) should have written permission; to avoid what may be a laborious permission process to target shooting, investigate complaints and act as needed to remedy any safety concerns.

George Spakowski, 164 Berkshire Rd., Sandy Hook – had concerns regarding who would be covering costs for reviews/surveys for approvals.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Chaudhary, seconded by Mr. Carroll, all in favor. .

Respectfully Submitted,
Joe Girgasky

Attachments:

1. eleven letters:

- Mr. A. Buzzzi (2)
- Mr. A. Cox (2)
- Mr. E. Cox
- Ms. J. Killin
- Ms. M. Dimmick
- Ms. M. Pacchiana
- Mr. P. Berger
- Mr. P. Lundquist
- Mr. R. Hutchinson

2. PD reports recent

3. ordinance suggestion, Mr. Hutchinson & PSN

- (a) reference #1, Mr. Hutchinson & PSN
- (b) reference #2, Mr. Hutchinson & PSN

4. CCM research, Brookfield zoning

- CCM research, New Haven ordinance
- CCM research, Avon provision