

# Board of Selectmen Meeting of March 18, 2021

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The Board of Selectmen held its second regular March meeting in person with members of the public and various presenters appearing via Zoom. The board approved the minutes of its March 4, meeting with a few changes. The board also approved several tax refunds as recommended by Tax Collector Krista Kot.

## Easton Dog Park

The board heard from Danielle Alves, our Director of Park and Recreation, about complaints she has received regarding out of towners using the dog park leading to overcrowding at times and people not cleaning up after their dogs at the park. Alves presented data from a survey she conducted as well as information she collected on what other towns with dog parks do on the issue of use of the park by out of towners.

After reviewing the information provided by the director and considering options, the board agreed with the director to leave the park open to all, whether town residents or not. The challenges associated with monitoring and enforcing compliance coupled with the experience of other towns and the survey response suggest taking no action at this time.

The Park and Recreation Commission will continue to monitor both the usage issue and

Alves will remind people to clean up after their dogs.

## Easton/Redding Baseball League

The board heard from resident, Kerry Kaylor, on behalf of the Easton/Redding Baseball League. They have invested heavily in renovating the 50/70 ball field, including the installation of an electronic scoreboard. They want permission from the board to allow local farms to act as sponsors of the field for a fee with recognition of such sponsorship on signs installed in the area of the scoreboard.

The plan is to have a different farm act as a sponsor and receive recognition each year. The board approved this means of thanking sponsors. The group may also consider other Easton businesses for sponsorships in the future.

## Proposed Hemp Farm

Resident and South Park Advisory Committee member Jeff Becker and Griff Conti of Franny's Farmacy of Westport presented an overview of a plan to grow hemp on the South Park Avenue property owned by the town. The hemp product proposed for the site would have no psycho-active properties but rather is a variety of cannabis plant grown for its fibers and oil.

A group called Easton Grows would operate the farm under the stewardship of Christopher Verni of Northwest Cultivation. Verni would hold the license for the project. This year would be a pilot project on a small scale to determine if the site is appropriate. The project would not interfere with the current plan to sell approximately 17 acres of the property to the Aspetuck Land Trust and would not interfere with rights of the current tenant.

Various business arrangements between the town and Easton Grows are possible, ranging from a standard landlord/tenant relationship to assorted joint venture partnerships. The board agreed that the project is attractive and worthy of further

consideration and vetting by the South Park Advisory Committee.

## Center for Family Justice Day

First Selectman David Bindelglass displayed a proclamation he will issue proclaiming March 26 The Center for Family Justice day in Easton. The center is celebrating 125 years of work on behalf of victims of domestic, sexual and child abuse by providing a safe haven, pro bono legal services and a summer camp for young people.

## March 23 Special Town Meeting

The board reviewed the five questions to be submitted to the townspeople at a special town meeting on March 23 at 7 p.m. at Samuel Staples Elementary School with a referendum on these questions to be held on March 30 from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m., also at the elementary school.

## Public Comment

The following people offered public comment on an array of topics:

Grant Monserrat, Dana Benson, Beverley Dacey, Jeff Becker, and Dwight Senior spoke about procedures and processes related to promoting and conducting the special and annual town meetings under Covid 19 conditions.

Jeff Becker spoke about diversity and inclusiveness related to the use of the term “selectman.”

Selectman Kristi Sogofsky pointed out that the next few weeks when town meetings and referenda will occur means that now is the time for citizens to participate and be heard.

Selectman Robert Lessler spoke about the recent pamphlet mailed to all residents by the political action committee CRG and EastonEye.

First Selectman David Bindelglass spoke about the overall improving climate related to Covid-19 and about the importance of the freedom of expression.