

**Town of Freedom
Public Hearing
Monday, August 31, 2020**

Chairman Babb called the Public Hearing to order at 7:00 PM. Present were Selectmen Leslie Babb, Ernest Day, Jr., and Alan Fall, and Ellen White, Town Administrator, who recorded the minutes.

Public attendance: Joanne & Al Haley, Bennett Road; Nancy Griffin, Old Portland Road; Paul & Donna Tung, West Bay Road; Gail & Dana Lee, York Lane; Police Chief Josh Shackford; Fire Chief Rob Cunio; and Transfer Station Supervisor Justin Brooks.

The Selectmen reviewed the proposed changes to the Fireworks Ordinance (draft copy attached to these minutes for reference). Fall stated that he spoke with the Clausen's who also followed up with written correspondence regarding an annual firework display they do each year around June 30th. Fall was in favor of adding the option to allow special event fireworks display by permit to the revisions. Discussion ensued. Day made a motion to accept the revisions to the Fireworks Ordinance as written to include one day before and after the 4th of July holiday and to also add the words "and special event" to the second paragraph so it reads "Commercial *and special event* displays shall be required a permit through the Fire and Police Chief". Fall seconded the motion. All in favor the motion passed.

Babb opened the hearing up for public comment. Joanne Haley questioned if non-commercial displays are not allowed. Babb responded that they are only allowed during the period defined in the Ordinance. J. Haley stated that her neighbor displays them all the time. She further questioned the definition of non-densely populated area. Babb responded that it must be maintained on your own property, debris cannot be going onto land of others.

Al Haley discussed how fireworks have evolved into so much more than bottle rockets; this past weekend they experience bomb-like explosions every 15-20 minutes until 1:00 am. He is constantly calling the Police Department as well as seeking out his neighbors, primarily renters, informing them that fireworks are not allowed. Most response received is that they are unaware of the laws. His concern is the disruption to all, domestic animals and wildlife. A few ideas proposed include adding signage to Bennett Road and Ossipee Lake Road as well as at the intersection of Eaton Road and Ossipee Lake Road, or sending out mailers with property tax bills notifying property owners of the town ordinances.

J. Haley stated that the ordinance can be changed but there is no enforcement. A. Haley reiterated the need to inform property owners of regulations in place. Day suggested posting signage at the Transfer Station and a few others locations in town and on the town's website. Discussion on enforcement. Chief Shackford stated that there is still an ongoing court case from last summer that has not been heard yet. The Police Department has been short staffed but they are still trying to attend to all the complaints received; the law unfortunately does not change behavior. Chief Cunio stated that the local fireworks store in Tamworth sells only fireworks for consumer use and those are regulated by the State but they are still significant displays.

Gail Lee also spoke to the cannon-like sound going off every half hour over the weekend until well after midnight.

Nancy Griffin questioned if there are any issues coming from Danforth Bay and suggested posting signage in that area as well as utilizing the community bulletin board and website in an effort to spread the word. Shackford reported no issue with Danforth Bay, Totem Pole or Robinhood as they

all obtain the proper permitting. Discussion on lack of notification to abutters. Justin Brooks stated that signs do not work, several posted at the Transfer Station are ignored all the time. Lee added that there are many issues with fireworks across the street from her property and she is in support of the change.

Babb called for any further input. Being none, Fall made a motion to accept the Fireworks Ordinance as amended. Day seconded the motion. All in favor, the motion carried.

Nancy Griffin confirmed the dates that fireworks are allowed without permitting as July 3, 4 and 5. Babb confirmed.

Donna Tung stated that she received no notification of Camp Robinhood's fireworks display a few weeks ago and it was substantial. Babb responded that abutters should have been contacted as part of the permitting process.

White suggested a pre-sorted mailing to be distributed to all improved property owners informing them of the fireworks ordinance. She will check on the cost to complete a mailing and report the information to the Board.

Babb stated they would be moving on to the Violation of Ordinances & Regulations Uniform Fine Schedule review (draft copy attached to these minutes for reference).

Fall discussed an amendment he recommends to include rights-of-ways to the unlawful camping/sleeping overnight section referencing it as line item #5. Brooks questioned if it includes camping in the Town Forest? Babb responded that camping is allowed in the Town Forest and is regulated separately. Fall stated that the amendment he is recommending would include the sides of roads and other areas such as the turnoff at Bennett Brook that are not necessarily defined. Fall made a motion to amend line item #5 to read "Unlawful camping/sleeping overnight at town properties *and rights-of-ways*". Day seconded the motion. All in favor, the motion carried.

Babb read the proposed changes to the ordinance including the Fall's amendment and opened the hearing up to public comment. J. Haley questioned where parking permits are required. Babb responded at all town beach locations. Griffin questioned if the permit is the Transfer Station permit. Babb confirmed.

Babb called for any further input. Being none, Fall made a motion to accept the Violation of Ordinances & Regulations Uniform Fine Schedule as amended. Day seconded the motion. All in favor, the motion carried.

The Public Hearing concluded at 7:28 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Ellen White, Town Administrator

Approved by the Board of Selectmen on _____:

Leslie R. Babb

Ernest F. Day, Jr.

Alan G. Fall