

10/17/2023 Proposed Firearms Ordinance Public Hearing Summary

6:30pm-7:35pm

The Public Hearing was live streamed, unfortunately the audio of the recording failed. Our sincere apologies for anyone who was watching from home and unable to hear the discussion.

A group of approximately 25 citizens assembled at the Town hall to discuss a proposed firearms ordinance, both for and against, the limiting of hours for “target practicing”

Citizens in opposition pointed out that many people work between the hours of 9am and 6pm as the ordinance proposed to be acceptable shooting times, and this would prohibit them for sighting in their firearms and practicing their skill. Specifically citing potential infringement of 2nd amendment rights which reads “A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed” arguing that “well regulated” should be interpreted to mean **skilled**, and to be skilled one must have to opportunity, without restriction, to improve and maintain that skill through practice.

Many citizens also spoke in support of an ordinance to limit hours and expressed that the noise in certain areas of town due to excessive shooting and the shooting of Tannerite at all hours of the day have made enjoying their day to day life in this rural and otherwise peaceful Town very difficult. Also siting the junkyard that was being created by people coming in and leaving junk behind.

The Board expressed that the junkyard was being addressed separately and the Town’s attorney had already started pursuing that route, how to address the noise issue is what is on the table at the moment.

A suggestion was proposed to add exceptions to this proposal for those shooting on their own property, as the majority of the complaints coming in seem to be about groups of people coming in to Town and shooting on private property not owned by them personally and that they have not been given direct consent by the landowner.

Citizens in opposition of the proposal argued that the Town has a noise ordinance and that should first be enforced prior to trying to control hours in which people could shoot.

Also suggested was perhaps the Town could invest in property that may already be owned by the Town, that may be in a more ideal location for this type of recreation that the Town could regulate its use by membership with gated access. This however does not address the private property that has attracted carloads of people coming in for hours on end day and night shooting.

A local farmer expressed concern that in the original proposal, putting down an injured animal as allowed by law was not included in the exception and this could potentially prohibit a farmer from putting down injured livestock during the prohibited hours. The Board explained that they had already discussed adding that to the exceptions.

Members of the Select Board explained that due to the many complaints that they have received over the past couple years, that they felt like they had to find some way to address the issue. This was a first draft created by the Town’s attorney in hopes to find some type of relief for those that live in the vicinity of an ongoing problem. Bringing this idea to the public to hear what the voters/residents of the Town had to offer for suggestions of changes, alternative actions, etc was the goal of this hearing. After the

conversations of the evening the majority believed that the proposal wasn't a good fix to the issue. The Board agreed that they had to go back to the drawing board and find another route to deal with the root issue and would not be support putting this ordinance forward to the voters in March assuring those who have expressed concern of the excessive noise, are not being overlooked, but a new solution needs to be sought.