April 2nd, 2018 Minutes

Finance Committee Meeting

**Present:** Patricia-Lee Achorn, Anja Bernier, William Brack, Arnold Cohn, Gordon Gladstone, Charles Goodman, Alexander Korin, Daniel Lewenberg, Ira Miller, Edward Phillips and Hanna Switlekowski.

1. **Discuss Planning Board comments following the public hearing on March 15 relative to zoning articles, especially marijuana articles.**

David Blaszkowsky, Chair of the Planning Board discussed the public hearing held on March 15th as it relates to the marijuana articles.

* The hearing began on March 15th and was extended to March 29th.
* The main focus of the hearing was on Article 22; whether or not to ban marijuana.
* Approximately forty people attended.Fourteen were in favor and one was opposed.
* Advocates of the ban addressed concerns around community character, reputation, conflicts of federal law enforcements, property values, undermining of town government, excessive traffic, increase of accidents and the potential of availability and accessibility to children.
* Those who did not want the ban addressed the needs including finances for the town, medical marijuana not being sustainable and the previous town vote.
* The Planning Board voted 1-3-0.
* Further discussion on Article 24; limiting the number of recreational marijuana retail locations will be done on April 5th, 2018.
* The Planning Board voted 4-0-0 on all of the other marijuana articles.

1. **Vote all pending Articles (including marijuana) – Finance Committee**

The Finance Committee members discussed Article 22, banning recreational marijuana establishments.

Gordon Gladstone made the following points.

* There are two sides when making a decision, morality vs. financial impact.
* The recreational marijuana market is hugely profitable.
* The school’s budget is very large and yet the schools struggle annually. This money could help reduce these issues.
* The mitigation fees are enough to cover all of the needs recommended by the town.
* Banning marijuana will not make Sharon immune to it.

Arnold Cohen made the following points.

* The arguments regarding banning recreational marijuana are not valid.
* Colorado did not obtain a bad reputation due to marijuana.
* Young people doing drugs has been a problem for years, this will not increase it.
* We will continue to have problems but this way we will obtain money as well.
* Traffic will not increase due to the location.
* It is a lot less harmful than alcohol, drunk driving is everywhere.

Anja Bernier made the following points.

* She has no prior affiliation to Four Daughters Compassionate Care.
* Regarding price structure, there are no stores in Massachusetts currently selling recreational marijuana.
* Average retail price for medical marijuana is $340.00.
* Recreational will have an added 23% tax, which already gets you to $420.00 per ounce.
* Supply is projected to be low, which will then push the price up even more.
* There are many unknowns but these numbers are the most accurate they can be.
* The data out there supports the assumptions as to costs and projected revenue.

Charles Goodman made the following points.

* Concerned with the community host agreement and if we don’t spend it all.
* The state will not review every town’s use of mitigation costs.
* Questioned what happened if the list of needs for mitigation is over $756,000?
* Cited Barrons Magazine and cannabis regarding how spot prices have dropped in Colorado, California and Washington.
* Asked if the total projected amount to the town ($911,000) is that worth it?
* The number is very minor in the scheme of things.

Ira Miller made the following points.

* Our state legislator did a disserve to the community when they put this law together.
* Sharon Commons originally was supposed to get the town over a hard financial time and it did not.
* We need to additional funds in town.
* If we are able to obtain the mitigation money, we can address other drug related issues as well such as opiates.

Hanna Switlekowski made the following points.

* Social media has changed immensely, creating discussions everywhere.
* Marijuana is out there and it will continue to be.
* The location of the facility is key; it is not near an elementary school or in the town square.

William Brack made the following points.

* Concerned with the impacts of legalization of marijuana in Massachusetts.
* The small impacts to the town do not compare to the benefits.
* The forecast that was provided is a modest threshold.
* The mitigation fees will address many issues we see today in our schools.
* Legalization created the issue now we have to combat it.

Anja Bernier gave additional feedback.

* She has two young children in the elementary schools she wants to protect.
* The store will create money for comprehensive drug education.

Alexander Korin made the following points.

* He moved to Sharon to ensure his children have a good and friendly environment to learn.
* Values are important and a safe, healthy environment for our children.
* Selling marijuana in the town makes it hard to tell children why you shouldn’t use it.
* It is very addictive and negatively impacts children.
* You can only succeed in town if you say no to marijuana.
* The number of kids impacted will rise. Even if one children are effected that is enough to say no.

Daniel Lewenberg stated that he wants to make sure that everyone in town comes to town meeting to vote.

Edward Phillips made the following points.

* He is in agreement with Ira regarding state legislator.
* It is a difficult process without complete answers.

The Finance Committee voted on the final articles.

**MOTION:**by Anja Bernier to recommend approval of Article 21 ban on recreational marijuana establishments in Sharon **SECONDED:**by Arnold Cohen **VOTED:**2-9-0. Charles Goodman and Alexander Korin opposed.

**MOTION:**by Edward Phillips to recommend approval of Article 22 permitting the sale and distribution of recreational marijuana in the light industrial district **SECONDED**: by Anja Bernier **VOTED:**11-0-0.

**MOTION:**by Gordon Gladstone to recommend *approval of Article 23*limit of number of recreational marijuana retail establishments to 25% of liquor licenses **SECONDED**: by Ira Miller **VOTED**: 9-2-0. Charles Goodman and Alexander Korin opposed.

**MOTION:**by Ira Miller to recommend approval of Article 24 tax on transfer of marijuana or marijuana products at 3% under state law **SECONDED:** by Anja Bernier **VOTED:**11-0-0.

**MOTION:**by Alexander Korin to recommend approval of Article 2, Acts on Reports **SECONDED:**by Hanna Switlekowski **VOTED**: 11-0-0.

MOTION: by William Brack to recommend approval of Article 3, Sharon Friends School Fund records and appointments **SECONDED:** by Gordon Gladstone **VOTED:**11-0-0.

**MOTION:**by William Brack to recommend approval of Article 4, Personal By-law **SECONDED:**by Hanna Switlekowski **VOTED:** 10-0-1. Arnold Cohen abstained.

**MOTION:**by Alexander Korin to recommend approval of Article 6***,***Capital Outlay budget **SECONDED**: by Anja Bernier **VOTED:** 10-0-1. Arnold Cohen abstained.

**MOTION:**by Gordon Gladstone to recommend approval of Article 7, Application of Bond Premium **SECONDED:** by William Brack **VOTED:**11-0-0.

**MOTION:**by Anja Bernier to recommend approval of Article 13, Amended and the Board of Health revolving funds SECONDED: by William Brack VOTED: 11-0-0.

**MOTION:**by Gordon Gladstone to recommend approval of Article 14, Revolving Fund Authorization **SECONDED**: by Anja Bernier **VOTED:**11-0-0.

**MOTION:**by Gordon Gladstone to approval of Article 15, Property Tax Exemptions **SECONDED:**by William Brack **VOTED:** 11-0-0.

**MOTION:**by Hanna Switlekowski to recommend approval of Article 20, Commercial Solar Farms on Municipal **SECONDED:**by Ira Miller **VOTED:**11-0-0.

1. **Documents Distributed Since Last Meeting**
   1. **FY19 South East Regional expense**
   2. **FY19 South East Regional FY19 Budget Hearing**
   3. **School Revolving Fund fringe benefits**
   4. **Trash Budget**
   5. **Executive Salary Survey**

The Finance Committee will follow up to see what happened with Town Administrator.

* 1. **Revised Article 4 with actual salaries**

One salary was incorrect and it has now been corrected.

* 1. **Trash and Recycling Fund working budget**
  2. **Charts for Monday**
  3. **Sharon Cares Presentation**
  4. **Four Daughters Presentation**

1. **Vote Minutes**

**MOTION:** by Edward Phillips to approve the March 19th, 2018 minutes **SECONDED:** by Hanna Switlekowski **VOTED:** 10-0-1. William Brack abstained.

**MOTION:** by Edward Phillips to approve the March 26th, 2018 minutes **SECONDED:** by Hanna Switlekowski **VOTED:** 11-0-0.

1. **Adjournment**

**MOTION:** by Edward Phillips to adjourn **SECONDED:** by Hanna Switlekowski **VOTED:** 11-0-0. The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 pm.