

State of Rhode Island

County of Washington

In Hopkinton on the first day of August 2022 A.D. the said meeting was called to order by Town Council President Stephen Moffitt, Jr. at 7:00 P.M. in the Town Hall Meeting Room, 1 Town House Road, Hopkinton, RI 02833.

PRESENT: Stephen Moffitt, Jr., Sharon Davis, Robert Marvel; Scott Bill Hirst, Michael Geary; Town Solicitor Stephen Sypole; Town Clerk Elizabeth Cook-Martin.
Town Manager Brian Rosso attended remotely.

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order with a moment of silent meditation and a salute to the Flag.

ROLL CALL

Councilors Moffitt, Davis, Marvel, Hirst and Geary announced they were present.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No one made any comments during the first public comment period.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA ORDER

There was no vote taken and no concerns voiced over the agenda order.

CONSENT AGENDA

Councilor Hirst removed the July 18, 2022 Town Council Meeting Minutes from the Consent Agenda as he had a question and wanted clarification on a motion that was made during the meeting. The minutes will be added to the August 15, 2022 Town Council Agenda for approval.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR MARVEL TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA NOT INCLUDING THE JULY 18, 2022 MINUTES AS FOLLOWS: Approve July 5, 2022 Town Council Meeting Minutes; Approve abatements resulting from 2022 RP-tangible tax adjustments submitted by the Tax Assessor; Approve refunds resulting from overpayments on 2021 MV tax roll submitted by the Tax Collector.

IN FAVOR: Moffitt, Davis, Hirst, Geary, Marvel

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

NEW BUSINESS:

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE PRELIMINARY REPORT/RECOMMENDATION

This matter was scheduled for discussion and to consider the Communications Committee preliminary report and recommendations. Communications Committee members present: Etta Zasloff and Sarah Steverman. Ms. Zasloff read from the Communications Committee report:

The Committee was organized on May 17, 2022 by the Town Clerk. We have held three meetings to date. Actions taken:

- * Elected Etta Zasloff, Chair, Sarah Steverman, Vice Chair, and Caleb Grant, Secretary.
- * Vision Statement adopted: **“The Hopkinton Communications Committee will serve in an advisory role to the Hopkinton Town Council to promote community engagement.”**
- * An informal needs assessment through mining Social Media group posts, meeting with the Town Clerk, and listening to public comment revealed the following top issues:
 - (1) the need for a better, easier-to-navigate town website for communicating to all citizens;
 - (2) the importance of considering communications with senior citizens, who may not use digital means to get information;
 - (3) the need for a responsive, efficient communication system, rather than relying on calls to Town Hall for information;
 - (4) the need for more concise and accessible reporting on Town Council and all Commissions/Committees, possibly through a newsletter; and
 - (5) the need to consider an insert into the annual tax bill as a regular way to communicate with citizens, especially on new developments.

We fully support the new Civic Ready website platform, as explained by IT Director, Jeff Frenette, and the Committee’s liaison Councilor Bob Marvel. It seems to have features to address all of the needs except #2 and #5, which we are still discussing. Once the migration from the old website to the new Civic Ready one is accomplished, we will be willing to test the Beta site and work with Jeff and Brian to make it as responsive to the community as possible. In the meantime, at the recommendation from Jeff and Bob, we are turning our focus to:

1. Clarifying our town’s identity including, but not limited to, interesting historical and current content to promote civic interest and website traffic.
2. Increasing engagement through a wide variety of communication tools.
3. Developing new content for all communication tools, related to the town identity.

At this juncture in our work, we do have one recommendation that goes beyond the scope of this committee, and may need to be investigated for feasibility, but could have a major impact on filling the holes in any communication network.

Recommendation: Please consider a way to connect the Director of Public Welfare to the town’s communications systems, such that part of that official role would be to foster and facilitate communication.

Councilor Hirst believed that the best place to post notices for senior citizens to read would be at post offices and that a town generated email would be appropriate. Ms. Zasloff advised that the new website was supposed to have a feature to generate an email to people who sign up for them. Councilor Marvel suggested that with regard to the recommendation, originally the idea was to have the Public Welfare Director be the point person for town-wide communications and engagement because that person already assists senior citizens and people in need; however, it was determined that the duties and responsibilities of the Public Welfare Director are very specific and they cannot expand their responsibilities. He did believe the Director of Public Welfare should be tied into communications overall; however, if not him or her, than someone should be the point person for the whole concept of communications and maybe at a high level providing direction with regard to engaging the residents. Councilor Geary asked if any other towns had a communications team and Councilor Marvel believed it varied from town to town with some having a Director of Communications. Councilor Geary thought some towns gave this responsibility to the IT Director. Ms. Zasloff believed in every organization there was a breakdown between IT and usage and this was the gap that they were trying to figure out how to fill, both electronically and for people without digital access. Ms. Steverman indicated that they were very excited about the roll-out of the new website for both analog and digital users and was hopeful that they will make a recommendation to generate a town general distribution email list and also to name particular places in town, such as the post offices and senior housing developments, to have as physical places for notices to be posted. She also noted that they did not see the IT director being the Director of Communication. Councilor Hirst suggested that the new website state what the function of each Board and Commission was. Council President Moffitt also believed that the role of the Public Welfare Director was whatever they put into it. He felt there should be a section on the website entitled: “Do you know:” and then have bullet point items. Councilor Davis felt that the communications director should not be the Town Clerk’s responsibility, but it possibly should come from her office which is the central place where most people connect. Ms. Zasloff indicated that they will explore many different ideas and make

suggestions to the Council. Joe Moreau thanked the Communications Committee for their work and noted that as the Director of Public Welfare he has worked with many residents as well as Boards and Commissions. Some of the things that he has helped residents with were: obtaining propane heat; answering health care questions; helping someone find a job; someone wished to make cash donations to a needy family; someone was looking for a place to live; someone wished to work at the Crandall House; issues with deer on their property, who to call; issues with trees down on trails; issues with losing power; the need for food; there was a mattress dropped off on someone's front lawn; issues with the SNAP program; community service hours; someone looking for a house cleaner; and, his latest call was from a resident who had spiders in her apartment. He noted that he communicates with people and felt that the Director of Public Welfare should assist in communicating with the public. Mr. Moreau advised that he would be applying for the Charter Commission in November and wondered if they had to wait until then to make changes to the Charter; noting that he wished to change the job description of the Public Welfare Director. Council President Moffitt explained that the Charter Commission makes recommendations to the Town Council, there would be an advertised hearing, a Town Council hearing and then the changes would need to be placed on a referendum for the voters to approve. Councilor Hirst indicated that he was concerned with the Public Welfare Director being overloaded with work for they only receive a small stipend; in the past they have only been a resource person. Lastly, Mr. Moreau acknowledged that Mr. Frenette has been helpful in posting information to the website and he believed that the new website would assist in getting information to residents.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

PROPOSED ZONING ORDINANCE DISTRICT USE TABLE AMENDMENT RE: CANNABIS USES

This matter was before the Town Council to render a decision on the proposed Zoning Ordinance District Use Table Amendments regarding Cannabis Uses heard on July 18, 2022.

Councilor Hirst indicated that he was pleased that the use table was changed from permitted to needing a special use permit in the commercial and manufacturing

zones. He felt this would provide the Zoning Board with some power, judgment and oversight and was happy that the voters would be able to weigh in on this decision. Council President Moffitt recommended that they take away the special use permits due to the fact they are going to allow this to go to a referendum and if it is approved by the residents he did not feel that the process should be as restrictive at that point. Councilor Hirst believed the public had the right to vote on this issue. Solicitor Sypole noted that the criteria for a special use permit mostly dealt with the surrounding character of the neighborhood. Councilor Davis wished to let the residents of the town vote on this issue and she wished the use table to remain as a special use requirement. Council President Moffitt reiterated that he did not want the residents to vote on this issue for most people did not understand the ramifications of the taxes. Councilor Davis noted that she had tried to get in touch with the Office of Cannabis Regulations, which is part of the Department of Business Regulations, to see if they could have a representative attend a meeting by Zoom to provide everyone with the pros and the cons and thereafter have those pros and cons put on the website so the residents could make an informed decision. Councilor Marvel also agreed with having the use table read special use permit rather than permitted, at least until they can see what happens with the state regulations and state laws. Councilor Geary acknowledged that this issue was going to be regulated by the state; however, he agreed with Councilors Hirst, Davis and Marvel that they should leave this as requiring a special use permit.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR GEARY THAT THE ZONING ORDINANCE DISTRICT USE TABLE AMENDMENT REGARDING CANNABIS USES HEARD ON JULY 18, 2022 BE ADOPTED TO INCLUDE SPECIAL USE PERMIT IN ALL CATEGORIES IN MANUFACTURING AND COMMERCIAL ZONES.

IN FAVOR: Davis, Hirst, Geary, Marvel

OPPOSED: Moffitt

SO VOTED

The approved amendments to the Zoning Ordinance District Use Table, Hopkinton Code of Ordinances, Chapter 134 – Appendix A entitled “Zoning” to establish and include subcategory 9 “Medical and Recreational Marijuana and Related Uses”. To be inserted at the end of the table beneath Category 875 Gun Clubs. Heard on July 18, 2022 and amended to change “P” to “S” in Commercial and Manufacturing Zones and to include definitions.

The approved amendments follow:

P= Permitted N= Prohibited S= Special Use Permit A= Aquifer Protection Permit

9 Medical and Recreational Marijuana and Related Uses

Use Category	RFR-80	RES-1	Neighborhood Business	Commercial	Manufacturing	Aquifer Primary	Aquifer Secondary
900 Compassion Center	N	N	N	P S	P S	P	P
901 Hybrid Cannabis Retailer (Medical and Recreational)	N	N	N	P S	P S	P	P
902 Cannabis Retailer (Recreational only)	N	N	N	P S	S	P	P
903 Cannabis Cultivator	N	N	N	P S	P S	A	A
904 Cannabis Testing Laboratory	N	N	N	S	S	A	A
905 Cannabis Product Manufacturer	N	N	N	S	S	A	A

Proposed amendment to include the following Definitions:

(6) (i) **“Compassion center”** means a not-for-profit corporation, subject to the provisions of chapter 6 of title 7, and is licensed under § 21-28.6-12, that acquires, possesses, cultivates, manufactures, delivers, transfers, transports, supplies, or dispenses medical marijuana, and/or related supplies and educational materials, to patient cardholders and/or their registered caregiver cardholder or authorized purchaser. **RIGL 21-28.6-3(6)**

(28) **“Hybrid cannabis retailer” or “hybrid compassion center”** means a compassion center licensed pursuant to chapter 28.6 of title 21 that is in good standing with the department of business regulation and that has paid the fee pursuant to § 21-28.11-10 and has been authorized to sell nonmedical or adult use cannabis to consumers. **RIGL 21-28.11-3(28)**

(16) **“Cannabis retailer” or “marijuana retailer”** means an entity licensed pursuant to § 21-28.11-10.2 to purchase and deliver cannabis and cannabis products from cannabis establishments and to deliver, sell or otherwise transfer cannabis and cannabis products to cannabis establishments and to consumers. **RIGL 21-28.11-3(16)**

(11) **“Cannabis cultivator” or “marijuana cultivator”** means an entity licensed to cultivate, process and package cannabis, to deliver cannabis to cannabis establishments and to transfer cannabis to other cannabis establishments, but not to consumers. **RIGL 21-28.6-3(11)**

(17) **“Cannabis testing laboratory”** means a third-party analytical testing laboratory that is licensed annually by the commission, in consultation with the department of health, to collect

and test samples of cannabis and cannabis products pursuant to regulations issued by the commission and is:

- (i) Independent financially from any medical cannabis treatment center or any licensee or cannabis establishment for which it conducts a test; and
- (ii) Qualified to test cannabis in compliance with regulations promulgated by the commission pursuant to this chapter. The term includes, but is not limited to, a cannabis testing laboratory as provided in § 21-28.11-11. **RIGL 21-28.11-3(17)**

(14) **“Cannabis product manufacturer”** or **“marijuana product manufacturer”** means an entity licensed to obtain, manufacture, process and package cannabis and cannabis products, to deliver cannabis and cannabis products to cannabis establishments and to transfer cannabis and cannabis products to other cannabis establishments, but not to consumers. **RIGL 21-28.11-3(14)**

All other Sections of Chapter 134 to remain in full force and effect.

The amendments shall take effect immediately upon passage.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO CHAPTER 159, SECTION 12 GROWTH MANAGEMENT ORDINANCE

This matter was before the Town Council to render a decision regarding Chapter 159, Section 12 Growth Management Ordinance of the Code of Ordinances of the Town of Hopkinton, RI heard on July 18, 2022.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR GEARY THAT THE AMENDMENT TO CHAPTER 159, SECTION 12 GROWTH MANAGEMENT ORDINANCE OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE TOWN OF HOPKINTON HEARD ON JULY 18, 2022 BE ADOPTED.

IN FAVOR: Moffitt, Davis, Hirst, Geary, Marvel

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

The approved amendments to the Growth Management Ordinance follow:

Chapter 159, Section 12 of the Code of Ordinances of the Town of Hopkinton, RI is hereby amended as follows:

The second paragraph of Section 12 shall be replaced with the following:

This ordinance is hereby continued in effect through December 31, 2024. It shall be reviewed for continued applicability by the Planning Board with a recommendation to the Council no later than June 30, 2024; and

All other parts of Chapter 159 to remain in full force and effect; and

This Amendment shall take effect immediately upon passage.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No one made any comments during the second public comment period.

ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY
COUNCILOR MARVEL TO ADJOURN.

SO VOTED

Elizabeth J. Cook-Martin

Town Clerk

Marita D. Murray

Deputy Town Clerk