

Special Board of Selectmen
Thursday, March 9, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.
Remote via Zoom
Meeting Minutes

5:30 p.m. Special Session

First Selectwoman Lyons called the Special Session of the Board of Selectmen of Thursday, March 9, 2023 to order. Selectman Goldberg, Selectman Murphy, Selectwoman Gordon, and Selectman Wilson also present.

Others present: Kari Olson (Town Attorney)

1. Pledge of Allegiance.

First Selectwoman Lyons led with the pledge of allegiance.

2. Consent Agenda:

First Selectwoman Lyons requests a motion to approve the consent agenda:

- a. Hiring of Brenda Davenport for the position of Assistant Tax Collector, 35.5 hrs./wk., \$31.18/hr., Salary Grade 8, Step 3, budgeted; pending successful completion of background check and drug screening results.
- b. Appointment of Christine Bekasi to the Senior Services Commission, Term expiring on 1/1/2026.
- c. Appointment of David Kadamus to the Ad-Hoc Facilities Committee, Term expiring on 1/1/2025.
- d. Appointment of Nicholas Conti to the Ad-Hoc Facilities Committee, Term expiring on 1/1/2025.
- e. Acceptance of \$5,000 monetary donation from The Madison Foundation and Neighbor-To-Neighbor for MY&FS's Emergency Fund.

MOTION by Selectman Murphy, seconded by Selectman Wilson

VOTE: this motion was passed unanimously.

3. Discuss options relating to the regulation of Cannabis sales, use, and cultivation in the Town of Madison.

The board will solicit feedback from the town via a community survey and a Public Hearing to guide them on how best to regulate cannabis in town. The board is looking at two possibilities - regulation through Planning and Zoning, enacting an ordinance, or both. Town Attorney Kari Olson recommends that if the goal is banning use on town property it's better to enact an ordinance, and if permitting use, to use P&Z regulations. The board discussed how sales, use, and cultivation of cannabis in town might impact the community, the mental health of town youth, and the need for consistency of messaging with MY&FS and the schools. The board then addressed how the Town might enforce any usage ban and will look at the current ordinance regarding use of tobacco products on Town property to ensure consistency regarding usage. The Town attorney will revise the draft ordinance to reflect the board's comments.

4. Discuss Draft Cannabis Ordinance.

The Town attorney will modify the draft ordinance to address only commercial use and cultivation in the Town of Madison. A review of the current ordinance on smoking/tobacco will also be undertaken to ensure it includes a ban on smoking cannabis products on public property.

5. Discuss and take action to call a Public Hearing to review Draft Cannabis Ordinance.

MOTION by Selectman Wilson to Table calling a Public Hearing until the 3/14/23 Board of Selectmen meeting so that the draft ordinance can be revised.

Seconded by Selectman Murphy

Vote: this motion was passed unanimously.

6. Discuss options relating to the regulation of short-term rentals.

First Selectwoman Lyons recused herself from the discussion related to short-term rentals. The board tasks Town attorney Olson to prepare a draft ordinance on regulating short-term rentals. Distinctions between short-term and long-term rentals, licensing requirements for Bed and Breakfasts/hotels, and what is currently permitted under town zoning regulations are discussed. Attorney Olson states the issue is very nuanced and many communities deal with the possible nuisance presented by short-term rentals by enacting regulations addressing noise and parking. Selectman Wilson favors a registration process for short-term rentals to gather data. The Town attorney cautions that with regulation comes how the regulation will be enforced; Attorney Olson will meet with Town employees (health department, fire marshal, town planner). Board will look at other CT town ordinances for guidance.

The board acknowledges that Madison has a long-standing tradition of responsible renting.

7. Citizen comments.

Linda Marino, 145 Middle Beach Road – respectfully disagrees with Town Attorney’s view that regulating short-term rentals is difficult. Requests inclusion of correspondence sent to the board be included in the record. Argues that just because a house is in a residential district does not mean it should be allowed to be a short-term rental. Short-term rentals erode the sense of community. Many residents had no expectation of moving next door to a hotel/motel. Enforcement is difficult for all regulations. Other towns have enacted short-term rental regulations and Madison should too.

Daniel Miller, Sunset Road – he engages in short-term rentals and would support registration. The majority of people want to be good neighbors so give them guidelines. If there’s an issue, call the police.

Laura Palumbo, 145 Middle Beach Road – requests a response to their letter dated 2/17/23. You really have to experience the short-term rental situation to imagine the problems – creates sense of insecurity and lack of community – tells anecdotes. Thanks board of selectmen for time and attention – moving towards regulation is good.

Annette – never unmuted herself.

Joe Vellaiparambil, Circle Beach – owns a short-term rental. Is surprised and shocked to hear some of the comments. He is open to registration but against a complete ban; notes many people use short-term rentals as a way to offset insurance costs and taxes for their homes.

Adjournment.

Being no objections, the meeting was adjourned at 7:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanne Stevens