

TOWN OF SIMSBURY
BOARD OF SELECTMEN - PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES
October 12, 2011

CALL TO ORDER

The Public Hearing was called to order at 6:04 p.m. in the Main Meeting Room of the Simsbury Town Offices. Present were: First Selectman Mary Glassman; Board members Nancy Haase, Moira Wertheimer, John Hampton, Lisa Heavner and Robert Hensley. Others in attendance included Tom Cooke, Hiram Peck and other interested parties.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance

PUBLIC HEARING

To receive public comment regarding proposed changes to the Blight Ordinance, Chapter 123 Town Code

Ms. Glassman explained that the Town already has a Blight Ordinance and changes are now being considered to that Ordinance. The Board has a revised copy from the Town Attorney. She said this hearing is designed to hear from the public.

Robert Kalechman, 781 Hopmeadow Street said this is an improper meeting as there was no actual notice in the paper, just a spot on the bottom of a Hartford Courant news article on October 4th. He also said there were no copies of the proposed changes to the Blight Ordinance, Chapter 123 Town Code at the Town Clerk's office. There are 4 or 5 copies floating around, but not the currently updated one. The Town Clerk doesn't have an updated copy to hand out to residents. He said this is an improper notice and he feels this is an improper hearing and shouldn't be happening. He also doesn't feel that the Town has any business entering peoples homes.

Ms. Glassman said Mr. Kalechman is correct and another hearing will be called. However, she would like to hear the comments of the people attending tonight. Copies were also handed out.

James Jackson, 15 Walker Drive said he has been a resident since 1961. He doesn't need someone to tell him how to cut his lawn or trim his hedges, etc. He doesn't like the "Big Brother" treatment. Common sense should tell you what is or isn't blighted property.

Joan Coe, 26 Whitcomb Drive wanted to reiterate Mr. Kalechman's comments. She also tried to get a copy of the proposed changes, but still doesn't know if she has the most current copy.

The new Ordinance should also include commercial property, storage, water course, etc. that are close to the properties. She doesn't feel anyone should enter a home without a warrant. She feels the time-line of the process of enforcement is lengthy with blight continuing. A health and safety issue should be enforced immediately. She wants a time-line included in the ordinance.

Ms. Glassman said there was an ordinance adopted in 2006, which is still in effect. She said there will not be a vote tonight, this is just for feedback so another draft can be developed.

Bob Dugay said he supports the strongest blight ordinance as he has seen roosters in his neighborhood, trees down for years, no soffits, big boats in yards year round, etc. However, he also doesn't feel anyone should be going into homes. The new ordinance needs good legislation and enforcement. He also wants a strong noise ordinance. He expects the Board of Selectmen and Commission to come up with something good for all.

Dennis Hannon said his house still needs repairs and did have heavy equipment there as he had a business running from there. However, there was nothing there that was unsafe and no one needs to go there as it is private property. He said a town employee and a boat and part of truck in his yard, etc and he should also live by the rules. He feels this employee should be fired, as he is supposed to enforce the rules for the Town. He doesn't think this should be followed through at all.

Ms. Glassman said his employee issue will be investigated.

Jack Voorvaart, Wescott Road feels property owners have property rights and that needs to be kept in mind when making a new draft.

Mr. Dugay said "beauty is in the eye of the beholder". He lives in a residential neighborhood and doesn't want commercial equipment there.

Mr. Kalechman said the public has spoken out and this is still an improper hearing. Ms. Glassman said they will bring it back again for another hearing, not voting tonight.

Cindy Gilbert, Bridal Path Way said everyone should be able to enjoy their property and wants a strong ordinance with enforcement of it.

Earl Gilbert said we seem to be trending to a vigilante mentality and we have to consider all circumstances. These are lean times and all dispositions should be looked at for each case- it is not one size fits all. There needs to be a time-frame for each individual issue. There needs to be very careful thought before a decision is made.

Ms. Glassman thanked everyone for their comments.

Ms. Heavner made motion to adjourn the Public Hearing at 7:12 p.m. Mr. Hensley seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary A. Glassman, First Selectman