

PUBLIC HEARING  
Proposed Blighted Structures Ordinance  
Grange Hall  
June 15, 2016

Mr. Walter opened the Public Hearing at 7:31 p.m. He recapped the changes made to the proposed Blight Ordinance since the previous Public Hearing on the subject.

The following citizens introduced themselves and spoke at the meeting:

Ms. Hepburn stated that she found the proposed ordinance “unnerving”. She noted that the ordinance, as proposed, allows for entry to private property, demolition and law suits which she considers bad options for dealing with blight concerns. Ms. Hepburn stated that she believes the ordinance gives the Town government too much power and feels that if citizens are paying their taxes they have the right to “let their property sink into the ground”. She also expressed concern that the proposed ordinance could cause problems between neighbors.

Ms. Leach supported Ms. Hepburn’s comments and stated that if a property owner pays their taxes, the Town should mind their own business.

Mr. Everett stated that he feels the proposed ordinance is a gentrification ordinance. He stated that he believes the Town already has ordinances in place to deal with safety and health concerns. He noted that, because he lives in a historic house that is not up to code and uninsurable, the ordinance could be used against him. He stated that he does not believe the current administration would do so, but he noted that there is no guarantee on how future administrations would implement the ordinance.

Mr. Braun read a prepared statement arguing against adopting the proposed Blight Ordinance.

Mr. Lyman noted that the proposed ordinance is much better than the original draft but that he is still uncomfortable with it.

Land Use Administrator Ventres noted that the Town’s officials must represent all of the citizens and that they have also heard from residents unhappy with the blighted properties in Town. Building Official Russ noted that there are gaps in the current regulations and he feels there is a need to create an ordinance that protects both the Town and tax payers.

Mr. Malavasi stated that he is concerned about the risk to first responders and inquisitive children if blighted properties are not addressed.

In response to a question asked by Mr. Blaschik, Mr. Walter advised that, after the Public Hearing closes, the Selectmen will decide whether any further revisions should be made to the proposed draft. The final version will then be presented at a Town Meeting for a vote.

Mr. Walter closed the Public Hearing at 8:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sharon Wheeler, Recording Secretary