

# FIREWORKS COMMITTEE INITIAL MEETING

October 5, 2016

Library Undercroft Meeting room

**Attendees:** David Upton, Selectman; **Committee Members:** John Bunce, Dennis Dellagrecia, Dave Birchenough, Heidi Tompkins, and Elizabeth Williams

**Public also in attendance:** Jonathan Pfister, Deborah Pfister, Katherine Schillemat, Rodney Elliot, David Johnson, Wally Francis, Tom Newcombe, and Steve Pierce.

Dave Upton brought the meeting to order a little after 7:00 p.m. He asked for volunteers for chair, vice chair, and secretary.

David Birchenough volunteered to be the chair. It was moved by Elizabeth and seconded by Heidi that he be nominated. The committee voted unanimously in favor. Elizabeth volunteered to take notes this meeting.

Heidi has the key to the meeting room and will be our liaison with the library.

Dave Upton described how the committee came about. After the 4<sup>th</sup> of July there was a report of fireworks that was disturbing to residents on Nubanusit Lake. It was also recommended by the NH Municipal Association that the town address fireworks in the Town of Nelson and the Selectmen agreed.

Elizabeth asked what the charge to the committee is. Dave Upton said that the committee would consider whether there should be an ordinance and make a recommendation to the Selectman by the end of December 2016. The discussion is around "permissible" fireworks in the State of NH per RSA 160-C. A question would be, who should hear this? Does it go before the Town or go to the Selectmen. The committee may want to research what nearby towns our doing.

Next came a discussion of the complaint. Fireworks were set off on Nubanusit Lake from a public piece of property - a rock in the lake - by some young men. There was a "significant" amount of debris, which had been collected and Dave B brought to the meeting. Dave B also brought a document bundle to hand out to the committee that included a picture of the debris, a report by Dave B, a list of NH towns that prohibit "permissible" fireworks, a list of all NH towns with their status regarding town fireworks ordinances, and an article from Environmental News 2008. (See document accompaniment).

*In discussion these were some of the points made:*

Current law says that you have to be on your own property to set off fireworks, not public property. (Towns get permits for "Display" fireworks for shows.)

John B - have we checked with the Fire Department?

Kathy S - her experience is that the noise on Granite Lake from fireworks is not just on the holiday, but all summer long.

- Elizabeth - Is this a noise issue or a debris issue?
- Dave U - Would like this to be about the fireworks and not make a noise ordinance
- Dave B - Described how wildlife is disturbed by the noise and the debris
- Tom N - On the lake (Granite), fireworks are launched from private property, but end up over and in the lake. Is there any State consideration of fireworks over water?
- Wally F - Silver Lake has same issues. Fireworks fired from private property by owners or renters and not just on the holiday.
- Dennis - Has anyone approached these people? (Also, relating to incident on Nubanusit.)
- Dave B - Yes. Did not do much good. He would like to totally prohibit fireworks.
- Heidi - Having grown up in Nelson and now living here again, she has seen a big change in the use of fireworks. She sees it as a lack of respect for others. Does not want to totally prohibit fireworks.
- Dave Johnson - Do we want a measured ordinance or totally prohibit?
- Kathy S and Elizabeth - would like to see a balanced approach. Perhaps permits.
- John B - What is our assumption? Is it just the lakes that are the concern or all areas. Can the Lake Associations deal with any of this?
- Dave B - Lake Associations cannot make ordinances. They would like to have something they can work on with other towns on the lakes.
- Dennis - Suggests that there would be a fireworks permit through the Fire Department. This was met with positive comments from some others.

**Tasks going forward:**

- Look at other ordinances. Research.
- Look at the issues from all aspects top (prohibit), to bottom (no ordinance), and levels in between (permits, time limits, etc.)
- How would any ordinance or permit be enforced.

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday, October 19<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 p.m. Library undercroft meeting room. (Heidi has secured the date.)

Duly Submitted,  
Elizabeth Williams

