



## TOWN OF GROTON

Board of Health  
173 Main Street  
Groton, MA 01450

## BOARD OF HEALTH

Evan Thackaberry, Chair  
Robert J. Fleischer, Member  
Michelle Collette, Member

Date: Monday October 21, 2024  
Time: 6:30 PM  
Location: The Groton Center, 163 West Main St Groton MA  
Members Present: Michelle Collette, Robert J. Fleischer, Evan Thackaberry  
Members Not Present:  
Others Present: Katie Berry, Faun McDonald, Joan Hamlett, Jason Pierce, Piyush Patel, Tim Scalley

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**Evan Thackaberry called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.**

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**Chapter 322- Proposed Tobacco Regulation Updates- Public Hearing-** Michelle Collette opened the discussion by sharing that the most recent updates to Groton's Tobacco Regulations were completed in 2023, though there were a few things missing, and so, the Leominster Tobacco Alliance met with the Board to review the regulations in place and make suggestions to these. Jason Peirce, of Haffner's, spoke asking about the regulation change pertaining to tobacco pouches, which would now be allowed only in adult stores. A member of the public asked clarifying questions about the new nicotine pouch regulation, and why the Groton Board of Health is proposing such. Evan Thackaberry stated that the intention is to keep tobacco pouches, which have no odor or smoke, and can be kept discrete in school or other settings, away from young people. Joan Hamlett of the Tobacco Control Alliance spoke to this, sharing that the use of the nicotine pouches has been seen in schools, and in workplaces, with milligrams as high as 16, much higher than other vape products, she providing information on nicotine product comparisons. Ms. Hamlett also stated that during the most recent State regulation review, these products pouches did not exist, and so are being addressed by local boards now, with neighboring towns also looking at updating their regulations. Michelle Collette shared information from the Statement of Purpose, showing major increases in the usage of smokeless tobacco products which are highly addictive and dangerous. Mr. Peirce stated that he believes that it may be that people will be pushed to cigarettes, without access to the pouches. Joan Hamlett made clear that nobody can claim, including FDA than any of these products are more harmful than another. Evan Thackaberry shared that as a certified toxicologist, all of the nicotine products are harmful, and that none of these products are safer than another. The Board discussed usage of nicotine patch cessation products with the audience. Mr. Peirce stated that he does have customers that only purchase nicotine pouches, and not cigarette products. Though it may not be clear whether the customer could be purchasing other nicotine products elsewhere, the Board noted. Michelle Collette spoke to the danger of nicotine to public health, and commended retailers like CVS for stopping the sale of cigarettes. Evan Thackaberry reiterated the need to protect young adults, as was done when flavored tobacco was banned. Joan Hamlett shared that in 2019 there was a state of emergency due to the use of vaping. Bob Fleischer asked what percent of sales, unflavored nicotine pouches represent, to determine potential for financial hardship, to which Mr. Peirce stated about 33 percent of his tobacco sales are pouches. Joan Hamlett pointed out that nicotine pouches have really only exploded on the market within the last 12-18 months, adding that at the end of July 2024, the Tobacco Alliance, provided retailers with their FY25 packet, to be signed by retailers, and she indicated that there are a lot of retailers that are not selling these nicotine pouch products, as many of them do not have FDA approval. Michelle Collette

moved to close the public hearing on proposed Tobacco Regulations, Bob Fleischer seconded, and the motion carried unanimously. Michelle Collette moved to accept and approve the proposed Tobacco Regulations as filed with the Town Clerk, Bob Fleischer seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

**14 Valley Rd, Tracy Smart, Tight Tank SDS Variance & Permit Extension.** - Faun McDonald, sellers Realtor, was present to request an extension to the SDS permit, and variance. Michelle Collette confirmed that the agreed upon \$1000.00 amount remains in escrow with the Town at this time, with a new owner putting that money forward at closing. The potential new property owner, Tim Scalley, was present for the discussion. Ms. Collette clarified that the permit will need to be updated with Nashoba Associated Boards of Health, with new owner and updated extension. Bob Fleischer moved to grant the extension period for 14 Valley Rd, both the SDS permit and Variance, an additional 2 years to November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026, Michelle Collette seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

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**OLD / NEW BUSINESS:**

**Health Agents Report-** Kalene Gendron provided notes in the meeting packet to the Board with minor local updates, no additional comments were made.

**Sign permits/ invoices-** No invoices or permits were signed by members.

**Minutes-** Bob Fleischer moved to accept the minutes of 7 October 2024, as submitted, Michelle Collette seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

**Schedule Next Meeting-** The Board of Health will meet on Monday, November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at Groton Town Hall in the 1<sup>st</sup> Floor meeting room.

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**Bob Fleischer moved to adjourn at 7:17pm, Michelle Collette seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.**

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Minutes by Katie Berry, Interdepartmental Administrative Assistant.

**APPROVED: 11/18/24**

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