



Firearm Sale Regulation Study Committee
173 Main Street
Groton, MA 01450

MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning Board
FROM: Firearm Sale Regulation Study Committee
DATE: March 7, 2024
RE: Regulating the retail sale of firearms in Groton

The Firearm Sale Regulation Study Committee (“the committee”) respectfully submits this memorandum to the Planning Board for review and consideration.

Introduction

As directed by the Planning Board, the committee held several public meetings in 2024 to discuss the topic of regulating the sale of firearms in Groton. Public meetings were held in Groton Town Hall on the following dates:

- January 25, 2024
- February 8, 2024
- February 22, 2024
- March 7, 2024

The committee members reviewed and consulted the following resources:

- Example zoning bylaw amendment proposals from the following towns:
 - Acton
 - Littleton
 - Sudbury
 - Westford

- Massachusetts Attorney General’s opinions on the approved zoning bylaw amendments from the following towns:
 - Acton
 - Littleton
- Proposed bill to modernize firearm laws in Massachusetts, HD4607.
- Descriptions of Federal Firearms License Types, as found on:
 - Chat GPT
 - FFL123.com
- Groton Zoning Bylaw, Section 218-10.4 Marijuana Establishments

Findings

The committee provides the following findings relevant to the topic of regulating the sale of firearms in Groton:

- 1) Zoning bylaw amendments were adopted in Acton and Littleton, and both were approved by the Attorney General.
- 2) Acton’s approved bylaw amendment limits the number of firearm businesses to two, at any point in time.
- 3) A proposed bylaw amendment is being considered in Westford.
- 4) A Citizens’ Petition in Sudbury to prohibit the sales, assembly, and manufacturing of firearms was rejected by town meeting voters.
- 5) The legal sale of firearms in Massachusetts is tightly controlled by both federal and state laws and regulations.
- 6) There are nine main types of Federal Firearms Licenses (FFL), and there are many different types of activities related to the sale of firearms that can be covered by one or more FFL types.
- 7) It would be very difficult to create a zoning bylaw amendment that covers all types of activities associated with the sale of firearms.

Recommendations

The committee makes the following recommendations to the Planning Board with respect to regulating the sale of firearms in Groton:

- 1) Any proposed zoning bylaw amendment to regulate the sale of firearms should focus on retail sales establishments operated by FFL licensees.
- 2) The existing provisions for Marijuana Establishments in the Zoning Bylaw seem to provide a reasonable starting framework for regulating firearms retail establishments.
- 3) There should be provisions to prevent the sub-letting of approved retail spaces and/or the piggy-backing of multiple retailers under a single FFL.
- 4) The attached draft zoning bylaw amendment article is provided for the Planning Board’s review, for potential consideration in the 2024 Fall Town Meeting.

The members of the Firearm Sale Regulation Study Committee appreciate the opportunity to provide these findings and recommendations to the Planning Board.

Thank you for your consideration.

Members of the Firearm Sale Regulation Study Committee:

Russell Burke, Planning Board Member

Phil Francisco, Planning Board Member

Michael Luth, Police Chief

Becky Pine, Select Board Member

Paul Hathaway, Member at Large

John Smigelski, Member at Large