



**Policy Work Group
Minutes**

March 14, 2016 at 12pm | 50 Payson Ave, 2nd Floor

<p>Welcome/review of last meeting</p>	<p><i>Present:</i> <i>Cherry S., Stephen L., Jeff H., Ruth E., Jason G., Al S., Jen M., Chris Lu.</i></p>	
<p>Goal: Decrease underage alcohol use</p>	<p>1. Masslive Article about the draft Alcohol Regulations Since we have new members, we reviewed the history of these regulations leading up to the recent Licensing Board (LB) meeting at which Stephen introduced himself: This goes back to 2013, before Ruth was hired as the Coordinator and before the coalition got funding from Drug-Free Communities grant. Through conversations with Heather Warner who was coordinating at that point through the SPIFFY coalition and with input from Officer Schadel who was also involved at the time, we have put together this history: at that time, in response to concerns raised by the Licensing Board, police, mayor’s office, and other community leaders, the coalition/task force began looking for model regulations from other communities and hired an expert in the field to do this. The consultant, with input from the licensing board and coalition members, drafted a proposed set of regulations for Easthampton. These proposed regulations were not actually considered or put on the LB agenda in 2013, and the task force was transitioning into a coalition with paid staff, so it wasn’t until June 2014 that we went back to the Licensing Board to ask them to consider them, again at the urging of city leaders. Nothing happened with them, so when we heard that the City Council was going to vote on requesting an increase in the number of liquor licenses in town, this committee thought it would be a good opportunity to point out that the city still had not reviewed or updated its regulations regarding alcohol sales and underage access and that there were draft regulations that the LB might consider. The City Council members seemed to agree that it made sense to go back, once again, to the LB.</p> <p>Our strategy was to raise awareness, start the conversations where we could and hopefully generate some interest in the LB to take up the regulations for consideration. The next step was to (re) introduce the coalition to the LB, and ask about getting consideration of the regs on the agenda in the future. Stephen explained that he had contacted the LB ahead, knowing he would be late to their meeting, to ask for an accommodation since he wouldn’t be there during the open comment period, which they agreed to. When he arrived, they had finished with the public comment and their other business, so they invited him to sit at the table and introduce himself which he did. He didn’t bring any paperwork, didn’t pass out the draft regs, and talked</p>	<p>Ruth will compose a draft of letter to restaurant and bar owners.</p>

	<p>generally about the coalition and mentioned the draft regulations. After a cordial conversation the LB suggested they might put this on the agenda for April. That was as far as it had gotten.</p> <p>The article left some with the impression that he had actually pushed for the regs to be considered in some way, which he assured us had not happened. Nor had he tried to circumvent open meeting laws in any way. In fact when asked point blank by the reporter if the coalition supported the regs, because she noticed that he hadn't taken a stance on them when they came up during the meeting, he said we hadn't take a stand on them one way or the other.</p> <p>We also discussed the parts of the regs that refer to dress code and upon close inspection noted that the draft regs say only that a sign needs to be posted IF the establishment has a dress code, which is not what was written. In discussing the noise issue, with Al's memory of the time in 2013, there were concerns from the LB members about noise levels as new places were opening at that time and neighbors had concerns about noise, which is why that piece was in there.</p> <p>Ruth explained that the reporter's email had gone into her junk folder so she never saw it, and when she got a phone call, the reporter did not explain she was on any kind of deadline. Since Ruth has to get permission to talk to any reporter, she couldn't get right back to her and by the time she did, it was too late, the story had already been posted online.</p> <p>At this point, we are have to figure out how to respond and try to educate people on the history, the other people involved, and our proper role in this.</p> <p>Moving forward: Make sure Executive and Policy Committees have facts and key points. Update Coalition Members about the article and the Coalition's response. Anticipate arguments against the policies and anticipate the press response to all actions and statements so that we can promote open discussion based on best practices and local facts. Letters to restaurants and bar owners should be sent with follow-up conversations.</p> <p>The coalition will release a statement later in the day to address some of the misconceptions. Other areas of concerns will be brought up</p>	<p>Executive Committee will compose an official statement</p>
<p>Goal: Decrease underage tobacco use</p>	<p>2. E-Cigarettes Community Forum: As part of its grant funding, SADD will have to present the findings of the e-cigarettes survey they did in the High School. We would like to assist them in providing a community platform to present their data. At the next policy workgroup meeting, we can discuss who our target audience would be, and how we can best hold this event.</p>	<p>Chris will work with SADD to figure out a timeline for their survey data.</p>

Next Meeting: April 13th at Noon in 50 Payson Ave. 2nd Floor Conference Room