

Dear Citizens,

As you know, the March 9<sup>th</sup> dog park public hearing and the March 10<sup>th</sup> dog park referendum were cancelled at the recommendation of the Weston emergency management team. First Selectman Spaulding has fielded several inquiries this week about why the dog park question will be determined in a somewhat different fashion moving forward. We figure its best to share a more detailed answer with you. Initially, the Town Attorney sanctioned the plan to address the petition with a public hearing and a referendum vote. Upon further review, the Town Attorney advised that a more appropriate course of action is to address the petition by holding a Special Town Meeting for discussion purposes only and then to adjourn that meeting to a machine ballot. The Town Attorney also explained that there is a legal difference between a referendum vote and a machine ballot. The former allows for absentee ballots. The latter does not. The Town Attorney has confirmed this after speaking with the elections division of the Secretary of the State's office.

The Town Attorney has also advised us that in order for a "yes" vote to prevail at the April 4<sup>th</sup> machine ballot, two things need to happen: 1) More voters need to vote yes than no; 2) The number of yes votes must be equal to or greater than 3% of the total number of qualified voters. Qualified Voters include both registered voters and voters that are eligible to vote by virtue of the Grand List.

Given the requirement to have the Special Town Meeting within thirty days of the petition being accepted, the deadline for holding the Special Town Meeting is March 22, 2018. Per the law, the machine ballot must occur within seven to fourteen days following the Special Town meeting. We selected the machine ballot date of April 4, 2018 after conferring with the registrars, considering school vacation calendars, taking into account religious holidays, and the fact that generally past referenda were held on weekdays. Furthermore, the hours of the machine ballot were set at 6 am to 8 pm (the maximum allowable under state law) in consideration of the fact that absentee ballots will not be accepted. The intent is for as many people as possible to vote legally the day of the machine ballot.

Special Town Meeting – March 22, 2018 at 7pm in the Weston Middle School Cafeteria  
Machine Ballot Vote – April 4, 2018 from 6am to 8pm in the Weston Town Hall Meeting Room

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,  
Jonathan Luiz & Christopher Spaulding