



DESIREE ASELBKIAN
137 Woodland Road
Southborough, Massachusetts 01772

6/7/2016

Board of Selectmen
Mr. John Rooney, Chairman
17 Common Street
Southborough, MA 01772

Dear Mr. Rooney and Members of the Board,

I am writing to inform you that after much deliberation I have decided not to seek reappointment to the Public Works Planning Board (PWPB). I have informed the Town Moderator (appointing authority) the same.

After two years on the PWPB, I walk away with a dual sense of accomplishment and frustration. While I am pleased I was part of reenergizing the PWPB, I am equally dissatisfied with the lack of collaboration the PWPB has received from the Town's executive. It is very disconcerting to be a member of a board that must struggle to do its job effectively due to a lack of courtesy, respect, and appreciation. While the Board of Selectmen (BOS) is not the appointing authority, it is the direct board the PWPB reports to offering advice on certain Department of Public Works (DPW) matters.

I joined the PWPB to try to promote, enhance, and support the DPW and its mission to provide quality services to our Town. This was after the Cemetery debacle of 2014. I was met with a hostile and divisive environment from the beginning. At my very first meeting two major events set the tone: 1) I was elected chairperson with an uncomfortable 3-2 vote, and 2) former BOS chairman, Bill Boland, told the PWPB that he didn't believe we had any relevance and if it were up to him the PWPB would not exist. From then on I did my very best to work cooperatively with my colleagues, the DPW Superintendent, the BOS, and the Town Administrator. I gained trust and respect from my colleagues and was re-elected chairperson unanimously establishing a professional working relationship with the group. However, I am not convinced the DPW Superintendent, BOS, or the Town Administrator ever truly wanted the PWPB to work efficiently and effectively. The course of events this past year confirmed my assessment.

After multiple attempts to bridge the gap between the PWPB and the BOS, I appealed to Selectmen to work with us or dissolve the board through home rule petition during a BOS meeting in September 2015. This resulted in Mr. Shea outlining in his personal goals a need to clarify the role of the PWPB. Ultimately, the BOS voted to make this a yearly goal. I'll note that due to my insistence and the PWPB's tenacity, this was the only BOS goal of 2015-2016 that was successfully achieved. I am very proud of that accomplishment.

Unfortunately, the events leading up to the June 7, 2016 BOS meeting solidified my decision not to seek re-appointment. Even though the PWPB and BOS agreed to a clarified charge three weeks prior, there was no attempt to communicate and reach out to the PWPB relative to the Transfer Station Rules and Regulations agenda item. Per the clarified charge, the PWPB has review and recommendation authority over this issue; yet the Town never informed me of the agenda item and/or deadline for submission of documentation for the BOS meeting. I did, however, submit material the Wednesday prior to the BOS meeting, as I assumed this discussion was taking place. I never received confirmation of my correspondence, and it was not included in the public packet. Additionally, the DPW Superintendent notified the PWPB of a change in Transfer Station information (financial numbers) after my memo was sent. I firmly believe that had my memo not been sent, Ms. Galligan would not have informed the PWPB of any changes. These deficiencies in communication and conciliation show me a true lack of willingness to work collaboratively. It's like the entire process this year to work toward a common goal was a colossal waste of time.

As a matter of fact, this week's experience is not an isolated incident. Over the course of my two year appointment, the PWPB members have enjoyed a great working relationship; yet Ms. Galligan flip-flops on issues depending on her audience. If you cared to attend any of our meetings, you would find we respect one another's diverse opinions, share plenty of laughs, and even discuss Town stories new and old. Ms. Galligan is cordial, informative, and assists us during our meetings. However, when the issues go before the BOS and the camera turns on, the story from Ms. Galligan always changes. A vast majority of the time, she tells the PWPB one thing and the BOS another. This results in a contentious environment pitting me as chairperson against her resulting in a public perception that the PWPB is "out to get" the DPW and its Superintendent. Nothing could be further from the truth. Despite my best efforts to work collaboratively with her and your entire administration, it has been a struggle of epic proportions. Serving on the PWPB has confirmed my view of Ms. Galligan: she is a very intelligent woman who is knowledgeable in her field, but exhibits tactless, unscrupulous, and evasive character. This is not up to the standards of our Community. Her lack of leadership and inability to connect with residents has hurt the Town and many DPW initiatives in recent years.

As a volunteer in our Town for almost 20 years, I am saddened by the current state of volunteerism in our Community. The complete and utter disregard for cooperation and appreciation for what Community volunteers have to offer is astounding. I can no longer in good conscience and good health continue to give myself to a Community, a BOS, and a municipal organization that doesn't appreciate the aspect of working together for the betterment of our Town. The environment the BOS has afforded me and the PWPB over the course of my two year involvement has been met with confrontation, disrespect, and very low professional standards. I do not know why anyone would want to volunteer for a board or committee and be met with the likes of you or your staff that is cold and often times unprofessional. It's an environment that I must remove myself from.

Respectfully Submitted,



Desiree Aselbekian