

Dear Select Board Members,

Because public comment was cut off at last night's (6/18/2024) Select Board meeting when some members of the public tried to indicate they were waiting to speak, I am providing you the comments I had prepared for last night's meeting.

I have edited my written comments to reflect changes I might have made at the point in the meeting at which I attempted to speak- I removed my comments indicating that I did not support the combining of the Open Space Preservation Commission and Stewardship Committee (as that notion had already been abandoned) and I added comments in italics to reflect my reactions to last night's proceedings that I sat through.

Please find my comments below and attached as a pdf.

Thank you,
Jenny Peet
9 Atwood

I'm Jenny Peet and I live at 9 Atwood. I served on the Stewardship Committee for almost 5 years until I had to resign due to health reasons... and I am here tonight to show my support for the volunteers on the committees whose appointments were held. I am also here to express how appalled I am at the comments made by one of the Select Board members at the June 4th Select Board meeting indicating that if committee members don't actively support the Select Board's agenda, then they should resign. This is a democracy, and democracies thrive on having a citizenry with a diversity of opinions who then compromise for the good of everyone. I voted for Mr. Hamilton because I thought he would be a voice of practicality, or at least it seemed so from his candidate letter. In that letter Mr. Hamilton also indicated he wanted to encourage the "selfless service" of town volunteers on committees. It was not a voice of practicality that decided to support the 40B proposal at 120 Turnpike without listening to his constituents, but it was the PLANNING BOARD that listened to the residents who showed up to their standing room only April 29th meeting in support of Breakneck Hill Conservation Land. As a result, the developer has made some amendments to his proposal so that hopefully we increase the number of affordable housing units in town AND see the 6 acres that were promised to Breakneck Hill get transferred over to the town.

The volunteer committee members are like the Federal Civil Service without getting the benefits. These people donate their time and expertise for the good of the community no matter who is helming the Select Board and they should be respected as such. It is very disappointing to see the disrespect afforded by the Select Board in holding up committee appointments at the last minute without notifying people in advance. This is no way to encourage people to volunteer for this town. Again, I find it incredibly disturbing that this Select Board would threaten volunteers over policy differences, and particularly in the case of the Stewardship Committee, the volunteers were DOING THEIR JOB in advocating for Breakneck Hill.

I came to witness the proceedings and support the volunteers whose appointments were held en masse. What I saw deeply concerned me: I witnessed the Chair repeatedly interrupting long-time volunteers even those displaying complete decorum in a difficult situation, the Chair cut off public comment when

multiple members of the audience were waiting to speak, the Chair engaged in personal attacks of a long-time volunteer, Select Board members engaged in a my-way-or-the-highway kind of mentality (indicating that they don't think committees should be allowed to submit comments if not supporting the Select Board's agenda), and Select Board members attempted to pressure a brand new volunteer into taking an additional and very substantial position. I get that you all have a difficult job, but you need some training in town management.

In closing, I hope the Select Board will reconsider how it pursues its agenda. It needs to work thoughtfully *and civilly* with its volunteer committee members, and I hope the Select Board remembers that there are many people in this town who support affordable housing AND open space. This town will be better served by thoughtful, respectful dialogue and compromise. Thank you.