

Plymouth Charter Review Committee 2015

ARTICLE 24:

To see if the Town will vote to amend Chapter 3-12-1 as follows:

3-12-1 ~~The Board of Selectmen~~ Town of Plymouth shall ~~appoint~~ elect a Zoning Board of Appeals of five (5) members and two (2) associate members for three-year (3) overlapping terms.

The Zoning Board of Appeals is currently appointed by the Board of Selectmen. The Selectmen are more likely to appoint members to the Zoning Board who support the development preferences, of the current Board of Selectmen and who may have assisted them in the election process. (This does not suggest it happens with the current board but does give the appearance it can.), not the entire community at large. Therefore, if a majority of the Selectmen are pro development or anti- development it is likely that citizens appointed to the Zoning Board will have similar views of the current appointing authority.

In contrast, elected Zoning Board members will tend to have preferences that are consistent with a majority of over 60,000 Plymouth citizens, not just three members (number of votes currently needed for the Selectmen to appoint) of the Board of Selectmen. The current appointment system is flawed as there is no confirmation process through the legislative branch of our current system of government.

The advantage to an elected zoning board is that they would be loyal to the people. By being a member of an adjudicate board and one of the most important boards in the Town of Plymouth it is important they answer to the voting public not the appointing authority. A judiciary board has power, prestige and influence over the zoning bylaws. The zoning board should be elected and represent the people who are affected by their decisions, this would ensure the elected members ultimately answer to the people they serve and not the appointing authority. Elections of board members involve the people in the judicial form of our government as our founding fathers suggested. Through the election process, debates and discussion will help the public understand the judicial process. The election of the board would keep them honest, fair, impartial and only beholden to the people who elect them and not the appointing authority. The zoning board should have autonomy as it relates to important decisions affecting the residents of our entire community.

CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE 2015

- Tom Baratka
- Tiffany Cessero
- Tim Grandy
- Karen Keane, Committee Clerk
- Mike Lincoln, Committee Chair
- Douglas O'Roak, Committee Vice Chair
- Anita M. Rocheteau
- Craig Sander
- Scott Stephenson