

7/1/21
Philip Malloy

Dear Commissioners.

I was unable to attend the Charter Commission's public meeting the evening of Thursday June 24, but I did listen in via Zoom. Thanks to all commissioners for their interest and hard work, especially to being open minded and genuinely soliciting input and advice from citizen neighbors.

I have lived in Plymouth for the past 35+ years - coming from Framingham by the way. I moved here because of a job opportunity and wanted to live in the town I work in. My 3 children, now married with households of their own, decided not to stay in Plymouth. I continue to live here, at least for now, because it is central for me to visit my kids and grandkids in neighboring towns. I am not sure I will stay here after I retire.

"What do I want from government" was asked? I want government to be more transparent and accountable, and to spend my hard-earned tax dollars responsibly. I am not directly involved in government, but have paid close attention over the years, and concluded that Plymouth's form of town government has failed taxpayers. You are aware of the story - schools falling down, fire stations with leaking roofs, the sewer debacle, TM potential conflict of interests, my tax rates steadily rising. There are so many issues like this in Plymouth that make me ask "Who's in charge here and does anyone care about how taxpayer's money is spent?"

My sister-in-law, a Plymouth native and an RN at the local hospital, told me after selling her house and moving to a townhouse "next time taxes go up I am going to have to move out of Plymouth!" My sister has a 3-bedroom house in Borne, swimming pool, one house in from the water on Buttermilk Bay. Her sons did very well in that town's school system. Her taxes are less than those on my 2-bedroom condo here in (Precinct 1) North Plymouth!

I too was on the Charter Transition Committee, standing out in front of supermarkets and other stores on weekends getting the 200-300 signatures I ended up turning in. Well over 90% of those I approached told me they were sick and tired of the way things have been and wanted change. Yes, they were "passionate". A few people told me "We've been thru this before. Don't waste your time. Nothing will ever change," before signing the petition. The only people (friends of mine) who refused to sign were the spouse of one town meeting member, and several teachers and firefighters, who told me "I respect your efforts but let me run this by my union first - if they tell me to sign I will, if they tell me not to I won't." Wow! I was not surprised at the comments of Paul Cunningham about the number of town meeting members who either are town employees, or their spouses are.

Town meeting, moderators, selectpersons, committee appointments - it's simply not working. I believe it is smoke and mirrors to believe that this is "real democracy" especially when hardly any is running in some situations, some TM members are elected with hardly any votes, and no one appears to be accountable or in charge. I don't care about precinct-level or neighborhood-level issues like stop signs (as one commenter mentioned). I care about vision, planning for the future, and a well-run form of government spending money as carefully as I spend my own.