

Plymouth Charter Commission

This 5-minute speech is a compilation of my 5-years-long work with Plymouth administration and community.

Current conditions:

1. Plymouth Town Meeting is supposed to represent the original democracy of America, but it is run by a single man for the past 31 years. The Moderator alone decides who may speak at the Meeting, regardless of the importance of the issue at hand. 135 members of the Meeting who convene only twice per year, cannot evaluate the minute details of the town's industry and must rely on the recommendations of various committees and boards of the Town.
2. A sole Plymouth Town Manager cannot manage the rapid growth of the Town. Its 65,000 residents and 124 square miles of territory require a large and coordinated body of expert managers.
3. Plymouth Select Board, Planning Board, and Advisory/Financial Committee bargain with developers, but don't plan for the future growth of the Town and haven't implemented the 7 Master Plans that were adopted by the Town since 2004.
4. Plymouth Community Preservation Committee spends taxpayers' money to build a few small houses, but hasn't used the large amount of the town-owned land to build a truly affordable habitat. Meanwhile, 40B projects destroy natural environment, but don't provide real affordability.
5. Plymouth Open Space Committee, Water Conservation Committee and Energy Committee have no instrument to implement the Plymouth Climate Emergency Declaration in their respective fields. Meanwhile, the advancing ocean and hurricanes threaten to destroy Plymouth downtown.

Solutions:

It is my considered opinion of an experienced architect and city planner, that Plymouth governance cannot meet the current needs of the town and must be reformed in the following manner:

- 1. Substitute the Town Meeting with a Board of Managers. This Board will consist of elected experts of the seven major industries: Healthcare, Finance, Jurisprudence, City Planning, Construction, Environmental protection, and Arts. Each industry will be represented by 3 Managers. The total Board of 21 Managers will convene monthly, consider all proposed projects and petitions, produce a new Master Plan and report to Mayor.*
- 2. Replace Plymouth Town Manager with Plymouth Mayor. The Mayor will have the power to veto the decisions of the Managers, and the Managers will have the power of overriding the Mayor's veto by a 2/3 majority of their votes.*
- 3. Establish a General Public Meeting that will convene four times per year and will hear all citizens who wish to speak about the municipal issues and present petitions to the Board of Managers without prior censorship and limitations. The city's departments will assist citizens in writing petitions.*
- 4. Establish Affordable Housing Committee that will produce a 5-years plan and report to the Board of Managers and Mayor monthly in accordance with the new Plymouth Master Plan.*
- 5. Establish an Environmental Preservation Committee that will report monthly to the Board of Managers and Mayor in accordance with Plymouth Climate Emergency Declaration.*

Anatol Zukerman, Architect, October 20, 2021