

HALIFAX BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SELECTMEN MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23, 2021 – 7:15 P.M.
GREAT HALL

Meeting came to order at 7:15 p.m. with Selectmen, Gordon C. Andrews, Troy E. Garron and Ashley A. DiSesa present.

The following business was discussed:

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Board as well as those attending tonight's meeting stood to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA

Moved by DiSesa and seconded by Garron, the Board unanimously approved the agenda for Tuesday, June 23, 2021.

SCHEDULED APPOINTMENTS

Interviews – Building Inspector/Building Commissioner

Andrews recused himself from the process of the appointment of the Building Inspector/Building Commissioner because of lawsuits between himself and the Town naming the Building Inspector and the newly filed lawsuit yesterday from Mr. Piccirilli naming himself.

Seelig wanted to note that on the agenda there is mention of a possible vote on the appointment of a Building Inspector/Building Commissioner and it is his understanding having talked to the Board earlier today there will be no decision tonight on that appointment.

Garron stated that he will not be taking any comments from the audience, if you want to assist us in picking someone letters would be accepted.

Robert Butler

DiSesa

Tell us a little bit about yourself and why you want to be the Building Inspector.

Butler

I've been here in Halifax for 23 years now. I don't plan on leaving, and I'd like to be part of the growth and development. I do have a grandchild here in town, and I'd like to see that through and make sure everything's going in the right direction. I've been in the trade for over 30 years, self-employed since '93 so I think I'll fit the job pretty well, good with people.

DiSesa

Do you have a construction supervisor license?

Butler

yeah – unrestricted.

Garron

Do you have any preconceived ideas of what the job entails?

Butler

I don't know, just enforcement codes and trying to help the residents out there with their projects.

Garron

How do you deal with an irate citizen?

Butler

Calm the situation down and you can't get mad or it's just going to blow up, so you try to just calm the situation down and remove yourself from it if it is getting out of control.

Garron

In the 23 years you've been here have you been to the Town Meetings?

Butler

I have not.

DiSesa

Do you own any other properties or businesses in town other than the house that you live in?

Butler

Nope

DiSesa

Do you think that you can be fair and unbiased since you've lived here for 23 years, and I'm sure you have friends and family and colleagues in this town?

Butler

Yes, I would do the job to the by-laws.

DiSesa

Do you have a current conflict of interest with anybody who is a town employee or an elected official at the moment?

Butler

No

Garron

Have you ever been to a Building Committee meeting?

Butler

I haven't been to any meetings.

DiSesa

Expectations of being a Building Inspector, you're aware that you could be called pretty much at any time if there's any emergency in town, I know the Fire Chief wanted to make that clear – are you somebody who can be readily available if an issue arises?

Butler

Yes

DiSesa

You feel like you can do the job, get on the job sites?

Butler

Yes

Garron

how well do you know the town and the streets?

Butler

I know pretty well – I've been here for a little bit.

Seelig

I'm not a voting member of the Board, obviously, I'm Charlie Seelig, the Town Administrator, but the Board grant me the ability to ask a few questions of each of the candidates. Are you certified as a Local Inspector in Massachusetts or are you certified as an Inspector of Buildings or a Building Commissioner?

Butler

I am not.

Seelig

What parts of the state's building code have you found to be the most onerous for developers and owners and how would you work with those people coming in with applications to reduce the difficulties they might have in meeting those standards?

Butler

I'd try to advise them through the codes and all the paperwork we've got to go through here as far as getting the building permit and just try to guide them to the best of my knowledge of what I've been through.

Seelig

Whoever serves as the Building Inspector/Commissioner of Buildings is also going to serve as a town Zoning Enforcement Officer. Do you see those roles as basically being the same or simply about different subjects, still the same role, or as different roles in terms of the work that needs to be done and the interactions that you have with the applicants?

Butler

I would say that different - zoning from the building aspect of it.

Seelig

Can you talk a bit more about what the differences are?

Butler

I would think zoning would have have more things to do with properties being put into different categories and the building codes as where the construction you are enforcing.

Seelig

Is your role maybe different in one way with Zoning Enforcement Officer than as Building Inspector or is it pretty much the same role?

Butler

I would say it would have to be the same role in a sense, you know, you still got to go by the codes and the by-laws.

Seelig

You're obviously going to need to be working with other departments such as the Board of Health, the Conservation Commission, Fire Chief, Police Chief, how would you go about creating a strong working relationship with those department?

Butler

Working together with them and if there's a conflict, trying to hash them out make it, make everything, you know, right.

Seelig

The Halifax Finance Committee is working with a consultant to review the town's zoning by-laws. I expect whoever serves as building inspector and zoning enforcement officer will be participating in this project. What parts of the town's current zoning by-laws need to be revised or changed, and are there subjects where in which the current by-law does not cover or is the current by-law pretty much fine as is?

Butler

I'm not too familiar with the zoning codes here.

Seelig

What role do you think that the Zoning Enforcement Officer should play in the procedures for site plan approval and for the granting of special permits and variances?

Butler

What would the role be?

Seelig

Yeah. What do you think that the Building Inspector/Zoning Enforcement Officer should play any role and if so what role in terms of the site plan approvals and the approval of or at least decisions on variances and special permits?

Butler

I would have to say you would play a big role because you have to enforce like I said the building codes and the zoning codes itself, so you'd have to be a big part of it.

Seelig

What's your process for enforcing, what would be your process for enforcing the state's building code and the town's zoning by-laws? So for instance, if you found a property owner or someone else was in violation of the building code or the town's by-laws, what procedure would you follow to ensure the property was brought into compliance – how much time would you give someone to bring that property into compliance and under what circumstances would you decide that a stop order, stop work order or a cease and desist order or a daily fine should be issued?

Butler

I'd approach the person and have them come down and fill all the right paperwork out, and then if they did not do that, we'd have the cease and desist order, and go through the motions of all that. The fines maybe but not sure if the double hitting fines is doable maybe try to guide them through the process.

Seelig

Would it matter if at least you know, would you hold off on issuing those orders if that person was in fact in the process, for instance, to go to the Planning Board for site plan review. You know, you go to them, there's no site plan that you've file yet, you're in violation, you need to file a site plan. They file a site plan, are you willing to issue a cease and desist order while that site plan is before the Planning Board or are you going to, if you see no progress, at what point would you start doing that?

Butler

After I spoke with them, if they will continue to do the work, you'd have to stop the work.

James Perry

DiSesa

Tell us a little bit about yourself and why you want to be the building inspector.

Perry

I've been in the building business my whole entire life, my career, and the building, building residential and commercial. Went to Wentworth Institute of Technology, got a degree from there, went into the family business – ran that for many years – was a 'clerk of the works' in the Town of Bridgewater for about a year and a half on a project. Also, after that I went into business on my own doing residential developments and new construction, renovations and flipped houses basically. And I always had it in my mind that at some point down the line to transition into some type of inspector's job and this came available, and I think I'm at a point in my career now that between all my experience and knowledge, I think it's a good fit.

DiSesa

Do you currently have a construction supervisor license?

Perry

Yes, I do

DiSesa

Are you certified as a local inspector?

Perry

I have two certifications out of three at this point, I have one more exam to take.

Garron

How do you deal with an individual who's upset with you because of the decision you make?

Perry

I think if the job itself, the zoning end of it is probably going to be the most difficult. The facts are the facts, I mean if they're in violation and they get upset I try to handle it like gentlemen. You have to send letters and get into that you know at some point you may have to get town attorneys involved in some of these zoning issues.

DiSesa

What's your expectation of being the building inspector? What do you think the job entails – are you okay with being called if there's an emergency and being able to show up and be present.

Perry

Yeah. I know the inspectors that I've been associated with in the past, say there's a fire in the middle of the night, you have to go out to the fire scene, assess the building, condemn it, vacate it, what not. You have the zoning aspects of the job, violations and other things of that nature. Obviously, the construction inspections. I'm not sure in this town if the plumbing and electrical work underneath the inspector – is he the department head in this town?

DiSesa

He's also the Zoning Enforcement Officer. Do you think you could handle the zoning aspect of it as well as the building?

Perry

Yes

DiSesa

Do you own any property or businesses in the Town of Halifax?

Perry

No, I don't.

DiSesa

Do you have any conflict of interest with any town employees or elected officials here?

Perry

No, I do not.

DiSesa

Can you read/interpret by-laws

Perry

Yes, I can. I served on the Board of Health in Bridgewater for nine years as well. We did a lot of housing issues.

DiSesa

Charlie had a few that we had written down. The Halifax Finance Committee is working with the consultant to review the town's zoning by-laws.

We expect that whoever serves as Building Inspector and Zoning Enforcement Officer will participate in this project. What part of the town's current by-laws need to be revised or changed and are there subjects of the current by-laws that does not cover but should or do you feel the by-laws are fine as is? Have you had time to look at the text?

Perry

I have not read the zoning by-laws in the Town of Halifax?

DiSesa

Would you feel comfortable having to revise or leave alone or work with finance to do that?

Perry

I think it's a good policy from time to time to review all by-laws and get them up to speed with the conditions that are happening in the world, because things are changing rapidly as we know.

Seelig

You mentioned so you are part of the way towards being a Local Inspector and after that you would be applying, going through the process to get the certification as a Building Commissioner.

Perry

Correct. Additional three tests.

Seelig

What parts of the state's building code have you found to be the most onerous for developers and owners and how would you work with them to reduce the difficulties that they might have in meeting those standards?

Perry

The energy codes are moving pretty rapidly and it's very difficult to almost bring the new homes into compliance. The new homes that we're building today are very airtight and they're a blower door test that they require you to do and sometimes it's very difficult to meet those standards.

Seelig

We talked a little about the zoning by-laws and the building code, obviously serving as the building inspector is also serving as a Zoning Enforcement Officer, do you think the roles that you play in those two positions are different or pretty much the same?

Perry

I think building and zoning are obviously two different issues, but they overlap in areas which it's helpful to be the inspectors and the zoning enforcement officer as well.

Seelig

What procedures would you follow when performing inspections – how does on the job safety and OSHA standards interact with the inspection process?

Perry

All jobs should be maintained in a safe condition for inspectional services as well as general public and the workers as well. OSHA you know, besides commercial projects, we don't see OSHA around residential projects that often uh unless there's an event that happens where somebody gets injured um so I would say mostly on the commercial lines where the OSHA was enforced.

Seelig

When would you expect that the Building Inspector would need to work with other departments such as the Board of Health, the Conservation Commission, the Fire Chief, and Police Chief – how would you go about creating a strong working relationship with those departments?

Perry

When I was on the Board of Health in Bridgewater all the departments worked very closely together, I mean, especially in small towns that's how you get you know things done and squared away so everybody needs to kind of be in lockstep and you know helping one another with the issues that they face.

Seelig

What role do you think the zoning officer should plan in the procedures for site plan approval and for the granting of special permits and variances?

Perry

As far as granting variances go, I think the building inspector should just kind of direct the zoning board as to what the facts are and it's very important that the Building Inspector/Zoning Enforcement Officer stays neutral in that process. I don't think that he should be rendering opinions I think you should be giving them facts. As far as site plan goes, we review site plans all the time and you know any necessary input should be put in at that time at the review process with the planning board's going through their procedure.

Seelig

What would be your process for enforcing the state's building code and the town zoning by-laws? For instance, we have a property owner or someone else in violation of the code of the by-laws, what procedure would you follow to ensure that the property is brought into compliance, and how much time would you give people to do so before starting the process of issuing a stop work order or a cease and desist order or a daily fine?

Perry

I think each situation is a case by case and depending on how much of an emergency it is and obviously you have to put more of an effort into your reasoning for getting them in compliance.

Paul Turner

DiSesa

Tell us a little bit about yourself and why you want to be a Halifax Building Inspector.

Turner

I've been in construction my whole life, I worked for my dad when I was 10-12-13 years old, I have a concrete business for 25 years – flat work, and moved on to developing land, building houses. I've built over a hundred houses the past 17 years. I've been the Local Inspector in Bridgewater for the past five years, I enjoy that position, I like it in Bridgewater, it's very busy, and I'd like to move up, like to be a commissioner of my own town.

DiSesa

Do you currently have a construction supervisor license?

Turner

Yes

DiSesa

Are you certified as a Local Inspector?

Turner

Yes, I am.

DiSesa

What is your expectation of this job? Are you okay with being on call, having to show up at emergency?

Turner

I am now in Bridgewater – not a problem. I enjoy going out, actually.

DiSesa

Do you own any properties or businesses here in town?

Turner

I own a small little piece on Franklin Street – some backland. I think that's it.

DiSesa

Do you have any conflicts of interest with any Halifax town employees or elected officials?

Turner

No.

DiSesa

Are you able to read and enforce by-laws?

Turner

Absolutely

DiSesa

The Halifax Finance Committee is working with the consultant to review the Town's zoning by-laws – have you had time to look at our by-laws?

Turner

No

DiSesa

Do you feel comfortable being able to look at them and work with the consultant to possibly revamp or change, maybe not change at all, decide what the town needs?

Turner

Yup

DiSesa

We expect the Building Inspector to work with other departments such as Board of Health, Conservation, Fire Chief, Police Chief – how would you go about creating a strong working relationship with these departments?

Turner

Introduce myself, go out on inspections together, especially with the Fire Department, Board of Health same thing, when a permit comes in, walk over, talk to him about it. I've dealt with on my end as far as developing property, I've dealt with all those boards, ZBA, Planning Board, Town Administrators, Selectmen.

DiSesa

How would you deal with a property owner, someone who is in violation of the code or by-law, what procedure would you follow to ensure the property is brought to compliance, and how much time would you give somebody to get the property in compliance before you do a stop work order, things of that nature?

Turner

The best thing to do is head out, knock on the door, talk to the person. Take a look, walk outside. Let's say it's a shed that's too close to the property line – go out and take a look at it, explain to them that you know the neighbor doesn't like it, it's a little too close, it's whatever the setback is in Halifax, show him that it would be relatively easy to move a shed, and just talk it out. Again, if they come to a point that they don't want to hear it, they don't want to go outside, they want me off the property, then you can go send a letter – a certified letter – and proceed through the process.

DiSesa

What if it's a situation where there's people working a job without a site plan or something of that nature?

Turner

I've run into it all the time in Bridgewater, almost daily. You stop, introduce yourself, if the contractor's like yeah, I know it, I'm good, I'll pick up, I'll stop, and I'm like okay then, please apply on line, it won't be a double fine, apply, as long as I see that permit when I go into the office the next morning and it's paid for, and I give them a 'one and done'. If I get out of the truck, walk over and I get what do you mean I need a permit for windows or a permit for a roof - you're talking to a guy that's been in business for 30 years, that's when I get a little bit perturbed. If it proceeds and I say because your boss's attitude you're going to lose a day's pay go home, double fine, and then next time that guy comes to Bridgewater, he knows.

Seelig

Obviously, you're certified as a Local Inspector. Are you certified as a Building Inspector or just a Local Inspector?

Turner

Just a local.

Seelig

Obviously you'd work towards that if you were appointed as Building Inspector?

Turner

inaudible

Seelig

What parts of the state's building code have you found to be the most onerous for developers or owners and how would you work with them to reduce the difficulties that they might have in meeting those standards?

Turner

Most of the framers out there now are building single-family homes, very familiar with it, I have no issues with them. The biggest problem with Bridgewater is the right of a property owner to take out their own permit. Which is fine, and during the pandemic I issued over 1,200 permits - a lot of it was for basements. But just because they had the right to hold the permit, they would look on YouTube as to how to build it, I had so many issues - a basement remodel can be one of the most dangerous rooms in your house. A homeowner can do their own electrical work, but you could have a plug fire that can travel behind the wall and if people are sleeping on the second floor, by the time that gets going over here, there's no smoke alarm because it's in behind the wall - very dangerous. I try to work with those people over and over and over. Some inspections sites I've gone to, 6, 7, 8, 9 times and try to educate.

Seelig

What procedures do follow when you're doing inspections and how do job safety issues and OSHA standards come into play when you're doing those inspections?

Turner

In Bridgewater a 100-lot subdivision was just built, they are very professional companies, so I had none of those types of issues. All the roofers were tied off, the siding companies were tied off. Again, I didn't really run into that, again maybe with the homes ...

Seelig

Whoever's going to serve as the building inspector is also going to be serving as a Zoning Enforcement Officer. Do you see those as two different roles in sort of performing different functions or is it basically the same role but it's simply two different subjects?

Turner

They're intermingled. The permit comes in, the first thing you do is check yourself.

Seelig

What role do you think that the zoning enforcement officer should play in the procedures for site plan approvals and for the granting of special permits and variances?

Turner

I think the plan should be that when it is presented to the Planning Board or the ZBA, a copy should be brought right to the Building Department, if not first. I could give a lot of directions to the person, before they waste their time going in front of the ZBA or Planning Board with their engineer and lawyer.

Seelig

I would ask you about enforcement but I think you've already covered that subject already through your answers in the sense of what really is going to be a question but what point when you see a problem occurring in terms of a violation of the zoning by-law, the building code. Obviously, you stepped in, but how much time do you give that developer or that homeowner to correct the problem before saying okay, it's time for a cease and desist, it's time for a stop order or even it's time for I have to impose daily fines?

Turner

I'll give you an example. I went out to do an inspection and as I was riding by a house, I saw there was a pool without the proper barriers. So that took immediate attention, so I knocked on the door, both the homeowner and the contractor was there, we stopped it. I did not leave until the above-ground pool had the aluminum fence around it. They were bugging me against the deck, the deck opened right to the house, no barrier, no alarm, no gate no nothing going up the steps, so I stayed there two hours while they put up a plywood barrier. First order of business was a permit that night and then the next day was a double fine. I issued it. I gave them one week to build the deck, make the barrier, get the gate, and alarm to the house, and monitored that job daily. So, something like that you've got to give them a little bit of time, you can't just put a sticker on the door and go out and work. You want the problem fixed. You don't want them to leak. Other examples would be someone doing a roof the homeowner assumes the contractor has a permit and you see rains come in a forecast at night, you're not going to kick them off. Again, permit, double fine, monitor. Also, you have a talk to them, you let them know that that is not the way. Obviously not all of them follow your advice, there's always a couple of repeat offenders.

Robert Fredrickson

DiSesa

Tell us a little bit about yourself and why you want to interview for the Building Inspector?

Frederickson

I work for MassSave, I do the energy assessments, residential energy assessments and I had a good friend of mine, Brendon Elliot, recently tell me about the position opening and gave me the basics of the rundown of the job, and I figured I have experience doing energy assessments going into people's houses, dealing with codes for ventilation, insulation, checking out heating systems. I've got a little bit of an electrical background, I went to South Shore Vo-Tech. High School and took electrical, did electrical for a few years too, so I have experience in the field. It's one of the main reasons why I want to actually try to get the job.

DiSesa

So you currently hold a construction supervisor license or an inspector license?

Frederickson

I do not. I do have a Building Performance Institution, so a BPI – I had to get qualified, I had to do all the certifications for that, which is about, I want to say about three months it took to get the license just to have the position I'm in.

DiSesa

What are your expectations of being the Building Inspector, and do you understand the commitment of it that you can be called at any time?

Frederickson

Yeah, I understand that and actually for my job at the moment I get calls all the time. I really wanted this – I grew up in Halifax, I lived on South Street for 25 years, I just moved out last year, to Pembroke, bought a house there. I love Halifax - growing up here, playing baseball, just all the sports, I love the community. I've got a lot of friends here. I just want to see the town grow, that's really my main concern and to make sure everything's done right, the proper way.

DiSesa

Do you have any properties here or businesses here in Halifax?

Frederickson

No, just customers that I deal with here in town. I have a family that lives here still.

DiSesa

Do you feel that you can be unbiased?

Frederickson

Yeah, 100%.

DiSesa

Work with your friends, your family?

Frederickson

Yep

DiSesa

Do you have any conflict of interest with anybody in Halifax right now – town employees or elected officials?

Frederickson

Not that I'm aware of, nothing at all.

DiSesa

Have you ever had to read a town's by-laws and interpret them?

Frederickson

Not so much but when it comes to like the MassSave, going back to my job right now, we have to always pull permits to do certain jobs – every town you basically have to get them. I don't know what like the specifics of everything, but I mean, I've read enough to know the basic of it.

DiSesa

The building inspector here is also the Zoning Enforcement Officer, do you see these roles as basically being the same but simply about being different subjects, or two different roles in terms of the work that needs to be done and the interactions which you'll have with applicants.

Frederickson

I mean it's all going to be the same to me, I mean it's part of the job, so if I have to do it I have to do it. Like I said, I really just know basics of everything, I'm willing to learn, that's really my main thing right there.

DiSesa

We would expect the Building Inspector needs to work with other departments such as the Board of Health, Conservation, Fire Chief, Police Chief – how would you go about creating a strong work relationship with these departments?

Frederickson

Really comes down to just being friendly, being nice, having the same interests and trying, if you don't have the same interests try to work it out so both parties win.

DiSesa

We know that you haven't read the by-laws in Halifax, but the Finance Committee is going to be working with the consultant to review them and the building inspector and zoning enforcement officer will participate in the project to re-write or revamp, revise or not revise – is that something that you think you would be able to do – read the by-laws?

Frederickson

Yep, not a problem really for me, just goes back to my days doing electrical work, I mean when I was trying to become an electrician before I went to college you're reading the Code Book every day, it might not be the 'funniest' thing to be honest, but it's part of the job and you got to do it, you got to learn it, you got to understand it and it is what it is.

Seelig

What parts of the state's building code have you found to be the most onerous for developers and for homeowners and how would you work with them to reduce the difficulties that they might have in meeting the standards of the building code?

Frederickson

I don't know if I'm going to answer this correctly or not, but I mean I've seen a lot of houses like down on South Street, in that general area, where it's like a lot of wetlands down there, and I've noticed a lot of people have been trying to build down there for 20-plus years now, and that always seems to be the biggest issue. I mean, if that's the case, what are you going to do - it's wetland, you can't build on it. I guess you got to find some like groundwork to like figure it out. I don't know if that really answers your question.

Seelig

What procedures would you follow when performing inspections and how does on-the-job safety and the OSHA standards interact with the inspection process?

Frederickson

There's a process for everything to do doing that kind of stuff. It really comes down to is there any previous history of any like step-by-step way of like training to learn how to do it and to common sense at that point where it's, there's got to be a way to do it and you just got to go about doing it that way.

Seelig

what role should the zoning enforcement officer play in the procedures for site plan approval and the granting of special permits and variances?

Frederickson

You should basically make sure everything's done correctly if I'm not mistaken, right, I mean just make sure everything's by the book, by the code, make sure it's run smoothly and properly, that's really it.

Seelig

What's your process or what you would tend to do in enforcing the state's building code and the town zoning by-laws?

For instance, if you had a property owner or someone in violation of the code or the by-laws, what procedure would you follow to ensure the property is brought into compliance – how much time would you give that person to bring into compliance and under what circumstances would you use a stop order or a cease and desist order or even a daily fine as part of that enforcement process?

Frederickson

First and foremost, you're trying to be as friendly as possible when you're doing certain things. I'd talk to him or her and try and work it out. I'm sure there's a certain timetable that is written somewhere that you have to get it done by and if it's really coming up to that time let them know this is the deadline on a certain day and if not done that is when you have to be the bad guy.

DiSesa

Do you have any questions for us?

Frederickson

When are you guys planning on filling the position roughly, because I'm actually getting married Friday and obviously I'm going away for a little bit – not a long time, but ...

DiSesa

It won't be this week

Garron

You'll be notified.

Frederickson

Fair enough. I'm going out of the country and not going to have my phone on me.

Robert Piccirilli

DiSesa

Tell us about yourself.

Piccirilli

I've been a resident of Halifax for approximately 30 years. I was self-employed for a number of years, I had my own business, and probably pushing 30 some-odd years I've been the local Inspector for this town for 15 years and the Building Commissioner in this Town for 6 years.

DiSesa

Do you currently have a current construction supervisor license?

Piccirilli

My construction supervisor's license is being renewed as we speak. It's unnecessary in my position because the local inspector and building commissioner's license are considered a higher education, so the construction supervisor's license would be paying the state another hundred dollars where it's not necessary.

DiSesa

Do you have your inspector of buildings and building commissioner license?

Piccirilli

Yes. I'm certified building commissioner.

DiSesa

I'm sure you know the expectation of the job.

Piccirilli

I'm familiar with it.

DiSesa

Do you own any properties or businesses in Town?

Piccirilli

I own two properties in Town. Currently I own my primary residence which I live in, and I own a property that has apartments on it.

DiSesa

Do you have any conflict with any Halifax town employees or elected officials?

Piccirilli

I don't have any conflicts, but I have filed disclosure papers.

DiSesa

Are you able to read and enforce the Town by-laws, and we can mix that with this question of if you feel that you are confident to work with the Finance Committee on revamping the current Halifax By-laws?

Piccirilli

I work with the By-laws every day, I've worked with it for approximately 20 somewhat years, 6 years under commissioners. I'd love to be involved with the revamping or rewriting of the Town By-laws. I believe that my opinion from when I started this job was that there are a lot of inconsistencies and conflicting language in it that needs to be addressed.

DiSesa

Do you see the rules as the Building Commissioner and the Zoning Enforcement Officer being the same or different – what is your take on the two different positions?

Piccirilli

It is the same position but there's different aspects of building and zoning intertwine every day, it depends on the individual case and what's being presented, but as far as the position, it's one position as well as other codes. I mean my position intertwines with the Board of Health, the Fire Department – these codes overlap in multiple areas.

DiSesa

But your process for enforcing the state's building codes and the town's zoning by-laws for instance, if a property owner had a violation what would your procedure be to ensure the property was brought back to compliance and how much time would you give somebody before the circumstances should stop work or cease and desist on?

Piccirilli

So, in my position I've always taken that stance that I'm not the fining officer, I'm the enforcement officer. My job is to bring or have people come into compliance. Sometimes that's difficult because people don't understand the codes, they don't understand the zoning by-laws. If I have to address them, I send out a letter usually or I'll go and ask permission to speak to them. If they give me permission to speak to them, I'll try to explain the zoning by-laws and/or building codes, if they have further questions, I can show them in the codes what it says and where it is. I will write them letters indicating where they're lacking or where they need to come into compliance. I'll give them the ability and if they don't like it to appeal my decision. So, my job, again, is to work with the public every day and to help the public understand what these codes and by-laws are.

Seelig

What role do you think the zoning enforcement officer should play in the procedures for site plan approval and for the granting of special permits and variances?

Piccirilli

So as far as zoning is concerned, again, it's going to depend on the application that comes in – if it's a commercial building or a commercial application or whether it's a residential application. My role is to make sure it meets zoning compliance.

As far as site plan is considered it would fall under our zoning by-law, and in planning and again, it's specific to the application or what's being presented as to how it would be addressed.

Seelig

What procedures do you follow when you're performing inspections, and how is the on-the-job safety issues and OSHA standards interact with the inspection process?

Piccirilli

So, the inspection process is part of the building code. To meet the building code in its written form. As far as OSHA is concerned there's certain safety standards within the building code that apply a lot to, for example, what you mentioned, construction. If it's a commercial job, there's a lot of problems with safety railings, stairs, lifts, equipment – things along those lines. But only certain things will fall on the building code – there's a section in the commercial building code that's specifically dedicated to construction. So, if it falls within that code, that would be my jurisdiction. If it falls outside of that code, I would certainly have the ability to contact OSHA, have OSHA come in and they would deal with it on their regulations.

Seelig

What parts of the state building code have you found to be the most onerous for developers and for homeowners – how would you work with them to reduce the difficulties that they might have in meeting those standards?

Piccirilli

So again, standards are difficult – developers, owners – different situations. I find in the residential code where the owner might be dealing with something they're doing on their own, they have the ability to pull their own permits. A lot of time they don't know what's involved in the code or how the code applies. I'm dealing with that every day – homeowners are coming in and pulling permits, I ask them specific questions pertinent to the permit, I guide them through it. If they have questions on the code, I cite the code, I show them where it is in the code, I go out and do inspections, and if it's lacking, I will help them to meet the procedures and the regulations. If it's a commercial code – now a developer could be both, a developer could be in the commercial and/or residential, so that's dealt with differently. In the commercial code, again, the building code is very difficult because it's constantly evolving. Every three years or supposedly every three years, the code gets adjusted. We're four or five years before a new code from the 2015 – I think they're talking about '22 possibly, for some new codes coming in, but it's constantly evolving. It takes constant education because it is evolving. So, a lot of times these people aren't keeping up to date with it so as far as what part of the building code is most onerous, I think the whole code is onerous because we're dealing with the international code council which is now the IBC (International Building Code) and the IRC (International Residential Code). There's also Massachusetts amendments that follow those codes that are different, so you need to go into the Code Book, you need to follow the Massachusetts Amendments, and then you have to go back into past building codes and amendments if something falls under an existing building code. So, it's very difficult because again, existing buildings have different treatment under the existing building code, commercial buildings fall under the commercial building code or base code, residential falls under the residential, so it's a very confusing and onerous process for anybody that would be involved, and a lot of time with continuing education you'll see architects and engineers at the same continuing education. So, it's something that's always evolving, so I think that's the simplest answer I can give you.

Seelig

I'm set in terms of questions. We did receive some correspondence, but I'll move on to that once the Board is finished.

Garron

Anything you want to ask of us?

Piccirilli

No, I've been here for 21 years, I think I'm familiar with the process. I would like to thank the people that are sitting in the audience in support of me.

Seelig

We had received letters from three people – Alison Vance, Arlanna Snow and from myself, statements concerning Rob. They all ask for them to be read into the record. Do you want me to read them or how would you like me to handle that?

Garron

You can read them.

Seelig read the letters from Alison Vance, Arlanna Snow and himself.

Garron

I want to thank all the applicants who came in tonight to make a presentation to the Board and hopefully in the near future we'll make a decision on who will be in the position for the town. Thank you for coming out tonight, and if you would like to forward letters to the Board in support or not support, it's up to you.

MEETING ADJOURNED

There being no further business, moved by Garron and seconded by DiSesa, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Ashley A. DiSesa
Clerk

/pjm

Documents referenced during Board of Selectmen's Meeting – June 23, 2021

Letter from Alison Vance
Letter from Arlanna Snow
Letter from Charlie Seelig