

Steven Borne
431 Wallis Rd
Rye NH

Select Board
10 Central Rd
Rye NH

August 24, 2020

RE: Suggestions for Select Board

Dear Select Board,

At the August 24th Select Board, Selectman Epperson asked that I provide my suggestions. These comments are the same or similar to what I have presented to our town boards in the past. I have also made similar statements over the years at our Town Deliberative meetings.

1. Are we a balanced community or a retirement community?

This is the first question the Town needs to answer. Our Zoning/Planning have been driving Rye towards a retirement community. If we are a retirement community, we should be moving away from a two building school system and focusing more on an older community. This will impact our zoning and the investments we make in supporting infrastructure.

2. Plan together

With the above question resolved, work hand in hand with the Library, Recreation, schools, DPW, Town, and other groups to plan what the "Town" needs for space moving forward. With a plan that includes all groups, there would be a joint private/public funding plan. As the Select Board was informed by Janet Davis, those with more disposable income will donate more knowing there is a joint plan and they won't be asked again. Not leveraging a Rye asset (volume of people with large amounts of disposable income), is a lost opportunity and not fair to those in Town who are just getting by on fixed incomes.

The matrix of options and costs Selectman Winslow has mentioned several times cannot be evaluated until the above actions happen. Additionally, there should be a quarterly meeting of all Chairs and others to communicate with each other.

3. Best in Class Master Plan

The Master Plan needs an implementation plan that defines who is responsible for what and when it needs to be completed. We also need to add, that too much is too much. So that if a property requires a large amount of compromises or variances, then it can be denied on the grounds of too many compromises.

4. Invest in a Planner

This is different than the current Planning Assistant who supports the Land Use Boards. This is a "Leader" who would drive the points above. Moving forward they would lead the actions from the Master Plan and guiding the other groups in Town. We need to stop depending on the Town Attorney to quarterback our planning.

5. Oversaturated spots

Admit that we have Parson's Creek watershed and other locations that are over developed, and that leach fields and wetland encroachments need to be scaled back. This means nothing new.

6. Expand the Select Board to Five people

The 1991 [NH Hampshire: My Responsibility](#) report, brings up that towns with a lot going on, there is too much work for three person Select Boards, so we should move to a five member board. You will also read how in many small towns, the Transfer Station is the new Town Center and they should be designed to encourage social interaction (post Covid-19).

7. Openness & Helping Mantra

What we do with Major Site Developments is the best example. The information people need is not made available, most importantly a table or list of all the waivers and variances granted. All documents submitted to the boards should be electronic for viewing by the public and to save the applicants considerable costs. From here we can go to not having a public discussion of the Website goals and the historical information would still be available in the public domain electronically. There are many more opportunities for improvement.

8. Discuss Hiring and Structure in the Public

The Fire Chief and Town Administrator were hired, with no public discussion. These were opportunities to re-think the current structure and to discuss if things should change.

9. Consolidate Fire Equipment

Working with our neighbors we need fewer vehicles and more funding for people.

Selectman Epperson has been slighted by my words in the past, but they have always been meant to help. After Sea Glass Lane was approved, I used humor to call out that something had to be broken to have allowed that kind of density visible from the main road. Selectman Epperson called me "childish" in a rebuttal, but I let it go and as I suspect, years later Selectman Epperson said, he was not sure what happened with Sea Glass Lane.

I used the words "come to your senses" for the Parsonage/Bank swap, since I believe that having the Library exchange their money so they get a piece of property the town owns is wrong. As the swap is becoming a sale, the Town should be funding this, not the library. Also, if a majority of voters feel the same way, then this "free swap" would have cost us a lot of money and your time. I advocate planning first and communicating more clearly to the voters and address in the next town election.

Best Regards,

Steven