

Cc: Shawn Joyce <sjoyce@nerallc.com>
Date: 04/27/2022 10:42 AM
Subject: Ensuring Rye's Government Supports Diversity

Dear Board of Selectmen:

Please see the attached letter that was published in the Portsmouth Herald on 4/19/22. I respectfully request that it, as well as this email, be noted on the 5/9/22 BOS meeting agenda and included in the meeting minutes. I also respectfully request that the BOS have a public discussion at the 5/9/22 BOS meeting as to why the selectmen oppose the following:

1. Ensuring Town Policy offers all residents, including protected classes, an opportunity to serve on the Rye Conservation Commission.
2. Having a public application and process as well as keeping public records for all residents interested in serving on the RCC.
3. BOS publicly interviewing all residents seeking appointment to the RCC.

These three items are standard for well governed communities, preventing discrimination and allowing diversity. Residents of Rye would like to understand why the BOS and RCC work against having a fair, open, public appointment process that affords all residents an opportunity to serve on the RCC. With all the new citizens moving into our community, the selectmen have a fiduciary duty to ensure there is an opportunity for diversity on the RCC. One would think that RCC members would support that as well.

If the BOS is willing to have a public discussion, I ask that residents are given adequate notice. Currently BOS meeting agendas are made public just before 5PM on the Friday before a Monday meeting. This practice does not allow residents suitable time to plan, attend BOS meetings and be part of discussions. For example, when the BOS discussed changes to Town Policy on 4/11/22, residents had little notice. Considering the changes adversely affect residents, ensuring little to no chance of diversity on the RCC, it does not seem reasonable to have rushed through such modifications with little ability for the public to comment. Respectfully - Shawn

Shawn Joyce

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Lack of fair process, transparency and diversity in town of Rye

Rye Selectmen are modifying Town Policy, so members of the Rye Conservation Commission are reappointed to as many terms as they like, lifetime appointments, preventing any opportunity for other residents to be considered to serve on the RCC.

Ironically, a selectman, who ran his election campaign on transparency and fair process, wife serves on the RCC. He advocated for the change in policy when he ethically should have recused himself.

Under the new policy, seats will not be considered open at the end of a member's three-year term unless the seated member does not seek reappointment. This precludes folks that are new to our community the opportunity to serve, ensuring there is no chance for any real diversity.

Regardless of a person's experience, residents are not afforded an opportunity to submit a public application and have a public, open, transparent interview process by the BOS for RCC seats that are supposed to be open every three years.

It is shameful that in 2022, the BOS and the RCC would push forward and support such a discriminatory policy that ensures just long term, homogenous insiders are allowed to serve on the RCC.

Shawn Joyce

Rye