**Statement for the Record on July 18, 2022**

**From Michael Pelton**

**Regarding Behavior of Windham Town Officials**

I have prepared a statement that I would like to read into record.  This is a personal statement and not a statement by the board.

Recently a town resident has read into record a complaint regarding a lister who allegedly came to their place of work and “harassed” them regarding alleged Zoning violations.  This public complaint has brought several other folks forward, who indicated that they too felt that this Lister was doing the same to them.

Additionally, one resident indicated that this individual was representing himself as a state environmental official.  I cannot verify the truthfulness or accuracy of these allegations, only that they are being made.

The responsibility of the lister is the assessment of equity on the grand list.  It is my understanding that a Lister is not tasked with addressing zoning violations, but the Zoning Administrator is.  If any member of the community has any concerns regarding zoning violations, they should be bringing these to the Zoning Administrator.

It is unfortunate that some community members feel targeted and harassed, no resident should feel that a town official is harassing them.  I am sorry that folks do feel this way and I truly hope that this was not the Listers' intent.

Here are 4 considerations that I would like to recognize.

First:

This Board does not have public oversight regarding other elected town officials and thus cannot act regarding alleged behaviors.  I encourage any community member that has any issues within our town to always come forward and feel free to enter any concerns into public record.  This ensures that your concern can be recognized by the community and town officials. Recognizing the issues and challenges faced by the community is highly important and can lead to positive change as we review our towns policies and look toward our towns future.

Second:

An elected official of the town swears an oath to its citizenry.  I ask that all officials respect their oath and respect all members of our community.  All town officials must respect that we as officials have power and authority in very limited and specific ways.  It is very important that we respect our authority and use it appropriately, with respect to our citizens and within our job duties.  An abuse of this power is a violation of our oath and of the constitutions of VT and of the United States.

Thirdly:

It is the citizens right to vote for persons who they feel represents their interests.  It is also within your right to run for public office or encourage others to run or vote for someone who represents your collective interests.  If your interests are not being represented, get involved and use your power as a citizen to effect positive change.

Fourth:

If our officials are addressing zoning or other policy violations, they are doing so to ensure that individuals or entities are not drastically affecting our town negatively.  It is our responsibility as a community member to follow state and local laws.  This doesn’t mean that we are powerless to change them, however.  In fact, I call on all our community members to review our town policies, ordinances and town plan and come up with better solutions.  If you find something that doesn’t represent the community’s best interest, propose a change.

In conclusion:

I apologize to anyone who feels like they have been inappropriately addressed by any town official.   If you are running into issues or challenges, bring them forward to the community so we all can work together to address them and find resolution that helps us all.  I encourage you to continue to work hard to make Windham a better and stronger community.

Thank you,

Michael Pelton