

**WEYMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
District 6 Councilor Search Committee
Executive Session
May 6, 2020, Thursday
VIA ZOOM #853 8490 6612**

Present: Michael Molisse, Chairman
Arthur Mathews, Vice Chairman
Christopher Heffernan, Councilor
Fred Happel, Councilor
Maureen Kiely, Councilor

Also Present: Kathy Deree, Town Clerk
Joe Callanan, Town Solicitor

Recording Secretary: Mary Barker

A Motion was made by Vice Chair Mathews to enter into executive session under Reason #8, to consider and interview candidates for the District 6 Councilor vacancy because, in his opinion, an open meeting will have a detrimental effect in obtaining qualified applicants; provided, however, that this clause shall not apply to any meeting, including meetings of a preliminary screening committee, to consider and interview applicants who have passed a preliminary screening.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Kiely. A Roll Call vote was taken: Councilor Happel- Yes, Councilor Heffernan- Yes, Councilor Kiely- Yes, Vice Chair Mathews- Yes, Chair Molisse-Yes. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Chair Molisse read the following statements to each candidate at the start of each interview.

In order to maintain the integrity of executive session, as we are conducting interviews via ZOOM, I want to disclose the following:

We are in executive session with each candidate, which means that I, as chairman, have determined who is allowed into this zoom call.

Each of the candidates was invited to make an opening statement and then presented with two questions from each of the committee members. The same ten questions were asked of each:

1. *Why are you interested in this position? What experience do you have that will make you a qualified candidate? (Councilor Happel)*
2. *Explain how you view the role of the Town Council. (Councilor Mathews)*

3. *What do you believe are the top three challenges facing municipal officials today? (Councilor Kiely)*
4. *Are you familiar with the street/boundaries of District 6? (Councilor Molisse)*
5. *Please explain any experience you have volunteering or serving the community. (Councilor Kiely)*
6. *Do you have any potential conflict of interests that could impact your role as Town Councilor? (Councilor Mathews)*
7. *One of the qualifications of eligibility for this position, is to be a registered voter. As participation and being an active voter in elections is important, please discuss your voting record. (Councilor Heffernan)*
8. *The Union Point Development is one of the biggest issues facing District 6. Please discuss what you know about the current state of the project as well as your vision for the project moving forward. (Councilor Happel)*
9. *District 6 is an incredibly active district, the person chosen to fill this district will replace an incumbent who has served for 18 years, and for some is the only District Councilor they have known. Please discuss how you plan to facilitate constituent outreach and civic association outreach. (Councilor Heffernan)*
10. *If not selected as a finalist, do we have your approval to disclose your name as an applicant? (Councilor Molisse)*

Candidate #1

Chair Molisse asked:

1-Do you agree that you are alone on this zoom call and that anything discussed during our interview remain confidential and cannot be discussed with anyone-family, friends, press, or social media?

2-Do you agree that once the Search committee makes its recommendation to the full Town Council and a District 6 Councilor is appointed, the executive session confidentiality ends and minutes of the meetings will be made public?

Candidate #1 responded “Yes” to both questions. Candidate #1 was invited to make an opening statement. He noted he was the first to submit an application. He provided family and background information and reported on his public involvement, beginning with the schools. Within the past 5 years he was a soccer coach, served on an advisory board at St. Francis school, Hamilton TWPC, the Superintendent Search Committee, the Vote Yes Team – information override, Chapman Override, Coops Troops which raised several thousand dollars for families with children with disabilities. He attended many meetings.

He reviewed his professional experience with a software company, and past experience as a Project Management Professional with contract experience. He wants to set a good example for children and to make the largest impact for the district and the Weymouth community.

Candidate #1 responded that the Council's function is as the legislative branch; they review and pass any ordinances, and protect Weymouth residents. He has no conflicts of interest. The top challenges are increasing the tax revenue. His volunteerism from a personal standpoint is to make sure it is safe and right for his children. He has taken a lot of interest and there's so much potential in Weymouth.

Candidate #1 added a general comment- the reason he started volunteerism was personal- he wanted to do this for his children. He has taken a lot of interest and there's so much potential in Weymouth. He is interested because of the potential- Columbian Square movie theatre, the library, South Shore Hospital. Weymouth is similar to the town where he was raised. He has a lot of experience with construction projects in Boston. He reports he is a very active voter and has voted in all local elections, and sign-holding. He is very active in South Weymouth and the Hamilton School community and believes the best way to start is to engage the parents, seniors at the Whipple Center, area residents and businesses, by attending community events in the district. He reported on his knowledge of the district boundaries, and pointed out the landmarks within it such as SSH, Columbian Square, 2 schools, Great Pond and Stella Park. He approves his name may be disclosed as an applicant, and authorizes the release of executive session minutes after the selection process is complete.

Once Candidate #1 was excused, the committee discussed his responses, his knowledge of the district and his qualifications. Vice Chair Mathews noted the candidate had general knowledge about the town, but his concentration is with the schools. Councilor Heffernan noted his answers lacked some detail and he did not mention the precincts. Councilor Happel reported that the boundaries knowledge was brief. Councilor Kiely noted his focus was on the schools and he missed other key items. Chair Molisse thought his responses should have included the bigger issues within the district, such as Route 18.

Candidate # 2

Chair Molisse asked:

1-Do you agree that you are alone on this zoom call and that anything discussed during our interview remain confidential and cannot be discussed with anyone- family, friends, press, or social media?

2-Do you agree that once the Search committee makes its recommendation to the full Town Council and a District 6 Councilor is appointed, the executive session confidentiality ends and minutes of the meetings will be made public?

Candidate #2 responded "Yes" to both questions. Candidate #2 was invited to make an opening statement. He has three children in public schools so has a vested interest in the schools. He works for a small engineering firm and supports small business owners. He is involved with Troop 9 BSA, the Elks and Knights of Columbus. He understands Mr.

Smart leaves a huge void. He cited budgeting experience. He reported that he has voted in every election, including primaries and is an active participant in the process, having run for the seat 8 years ago. If selected, he would facilitate outreach by making himself available to citizens. He did this for the City of Quincy as a City Engineer. He knows there is a lot going on with Route 18, Union Point, and development along the corridor. He can effectively interact with constituents, department and staff. His interest stems from his experience as a small business owner. His wife also owns a small business. They have extended family here and it is a great community. His background and experience are assets.

After pulling papers and campaigning he realized Mr. Smart was a good example and he believes he has those same qualities. He understands that a new master developer was named for Union Point and knows the hurdles with water and sewer. It's nice having the revenue, but it weighs on town and schools. He stated the top three challenges facing municipal officials are COVID-19 keeping the town hall closed and still getting what is needed to interact with constituents. The budget is also pressing right now, as is Union Point, Route 18 widening and softening the inconvenience and the work with MassDOT.

He reviewed his volunteer experience, as an assistant scoutmaster and the scout activities- meetings, honor flights for vets, Veterans outreach, flag decoration in cemeteries. Much of his recent volunteerism involves children. He stated the role of the Council is to set municipal code and operations of the town in a general guiding way, beginning with the budget process, and constituent services and outreach within the community. He reported that his current job provides engineering services with 5 municipalities and is aware of the potential conflict; that one cannot work within a town one serves. He is familiar with the streets and boundaries of the district. He approves his name may be disclosed as an applicant, and authorizes the release of executive session minutes after the selection process is complete.

Once Candidate #2 was excused, the committee discussed his responses, his knowledge of the district and his qualifications. Vice Chair Mathews liked his response to a potential conflict of interest and that he hit on the key issues. Councilor Kiely liked his background but would have liked more volunteerism. Councilor Heffernan noted he left out some areas within the boundaries of District 6. He would have liked to hear more about Columbian Square and Route 18 and more comprehensive information on Union Point. Councilor Happel noted neither of the first two candidates included Columbian Square, or that the district encompasses three precincts.

Candidate # 3

Chair Molisse asked:

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Candidate #3 responded “Yes” to both questions. Candidate #3 was invited to the table and given the opportunity to make an opening statement.

Candidate #3 reported that he is a relatively new transplant of 2 years, and is from RI. He works for a nonprofit organization in Boston and has a tech background. He has always been interested in local government. He is also a new father. Before Councilor Smart stepped down, he reached out to him to learn about the structure of government.

He noted that Sgt. Chesna was killed during his first week in Weymouth. He was impressed with the strength of the Weymouth community and the sense of hometown pride. He also witnessed it in the support of Mighty Quinn and wants to make a better community, despite not having longevity. His experience as executive director of a nonprofit has provided an intersection between nonprofit and tech startups and he has a lot of connections. He knows how to raise money and deal with many people all having different needs. He believes post-COVID, they will need people who can create a more efficient solution.

Union Point was the reason he moved to Weymouth. Despite it being a former superfund site, it offers the biggest opportunity in MA. It has the infrastructure, all of the electricity, plumbing, in some form, is already there. He read the new developer has completed projects of this size before, and is concerned they will have to change plans and offer more residential zoning than originally planned. Public transportation here is already extremely packed trains; by adding more residential, it will result in more congestion. Taking Route 18, Union Point and South Weymouth as a whole, what is missing is commercial opportunities that Weymouth has missed.

He explained the Town Council is the legislative body of local government. He understands Weymouth exists as a town but has a city form of government. The role of the District 6 Councilor is representation of the people, oversight of the executive branch, and helps move things along from bill to summation. He has no potential conflicts of interest. He reported that with the spotlight on federal and state government, distrust exists and spreads to local government. Constituents are concerned with their own issues and not the greater good. A municipal official faces quelling those complaints while focusing on the greater good. Trust, lack of vision by constituents, and being able to balance between the municipal needs and a day job is important.

His volunteerism includes a program in the tech world in Boston, and the Senior Food Pantry. He is a registered voter and has an active voting record. If selected, he will incorporate virtual contact with the constituents and will use his sales background to build trust. He is generally familiar with the streets and boundaries of the district, and used landmarks to describe them, but he does not know the history of the zoning. He approves his name may be disclosed as an applicant, and authorizes the release of

executive session minutes after the selection process is complete. He asked the next steps in the process.

Once Candidate #3 was excused, the committee discussed his responses, his knowledge of the district and his qualifications. Vice Chair Mathews liked his enthusiasm, but was concerned with lack of experience. Councilor Heffernan noted his brief statement about the role of the Council was not a good description. He comes across well, but his skillset does not match up with joining midterm. Councilor Happel liked his energy but was unsure what he meant by his response to the question on Union Point, as having infrastructure already in place. He opened his remarks by calling the committee “Senators.” Councilor Kiely noted that his volunteerism only relates back to his professional job. Chair Molisse noted although he has a lot of energy, he is fairly new to the town and he is not sure he knows what is going on in the town.

Candidate #4

Chair Molisse asked:

1-Do you agree that you are alone on this zoom call and that anything discussed during our interview remain confidential and cannot be discussed with anyone-family, friends, press, or social media?

2-Do you agree that once the Search committee makes its recommendation to the full Town Council and a District 6 Councilor is appointed, the executive session confidentiality ends and minutes of the meetings will be made public?

Candidate #4 responded “Yes” to both questions. Candidate #4 was invited to the table and given the opportunity to make an opening statement.

He reported that he has big shoes to fill; he has been a District 6 resident since 1968. He had considered a run for the seat in the 1980’s but couldn’t dedicate the time it would have taken, and then in later years, he would not have considered a run against Councilor Smart. He considers the role of the District Six Councilor like a district manager to look out for the people of the district. He has no potential conflict of interest. He votes in every election; local, state, and federal. His plan to facilitate outreach would be to get to know the business owners. The top challenges are a lack of revenue, public safety and public health, and getting things back up and running, including Union Point development and the shuttered businesses along Route 18.

His volunteerism includes coaching, fundraising, and installing the annual Christmas tree in Columbian Square. His current work as a plant supervisor in a printing outfit provided him with experience in spending and budgeting. He reviewed what he knew of the Union Point project and knows there are issues with water and sewer. He understands Washington Capital owns the land on which the property sits, but isn’t sure if Brookfield has purchased it yet. He will be excited to see it go through. He is familiar with the map of the streets and boundaries. He approves his name may be disclosed as an applicant, and authorizes the release of executive session minutes after the selection process is complete.

Once Candidate #4 was excused, the committee discussed his responses, his knowledge of the district and his qualifications. Vice Chair Mathews noted he's lived in the area a long time. His responses were short but direct and he knows the issues. He has been a volunteer for many years. Councilor Happel was impressed with the Union Point responses, but was surprised he didn't bring up Columbian Square. Councilor Heffernan noted his responses were indicative that he knows a lot about the area. He was impressed with the detail on Union Point, but he didn't expand on the district map. Councilor Kiely was pleased to hear him speak eloquently about Union Point. He knows the South Weymouth area well.

Candidate # 5

Chair Molisse asked:

1-Do you agree that you are alone on this zoom call and that anything discussed during our interview remain confidential and cannot be discussed with anyone- family, friends, press, or social media?

2-Do you agree that once the Search committee makes its recommendation to the full Town Council and a District 6 Councilor is appointed, the executive session confidentiality ends and minutes of the meetings will be made public?

Candidate #5 responded "Yes" to both questions. Candidate #5 was invited to the table and given the opportunity to make an opening statement. He knows Michael Smart, and hope everything goes well. He would love to represent the district.

He knows a majority of people in South Weymouth and has their support. He did some work on the naval base and thought the plan was a good one if it didn't place a burden on the town. The challenges would be to satisfy everyone- roads, schools, etc., without hurting an essential need. There is good infrastructure and schools. He has experience as a DPW director for another town, and in grant-writing, and it would have to be done without compromising other departments. His experience includes participating in cleanup days. His voter record is about 85-90% participation and includes local and presidential. Having grown up in South Weymouth, he knows many of the people and has a passion for the area. He believes that the role of the Town Council is to facilitate things forward to the Mayor to get constituent concerns addressed. He has no potential conflicts of interest. He is unsure exactly where the boundaries begin and end, but knows the general district area. He approves his name may be disclosed as an applicant, and authorizes the release of executive session minutes after the selection process is complete.

Once Candidate #5 was excused, the committee discussed his responses, his knowledge of the district and his qualifications. Chair Molisse noted he may not know the exact boundaries, but he does know the area. Vice Chair Mathews was surprised that he didn't elaborate on his responses. His response to the role of the Council only referred to interaction with constituents and only mentioned his knowledge of Union Point from having worked there. Councilor Heffernan noted he would have to have the knowledge to

jump in halfway into the term. His response as to the boundaries wasn't acceptable. They needed more detail than they got. Councilor Happel noted he was impressed with the resume but disappointed with the interview. Councilor Kiely was also impressed with his resume, but he was vague with his responses. Chair Molisse noted he could have prepared better; his introductory remarks were weak.

Candidate # 6

Chair Molisse asked:

1-Do you agree that you are alone on this zoom call and that anything discussed during our interview remain confidential and cannot be discussed with anyone-family, friends, press, or social media?

2-Do you agree that once the Search committee makes its recommendation to the full Town Council and a District 6 Councilor is appointed, the executive session confidentiality ends and minutes of the meetings will be made public?

Candidate #6 responded "Yes" to both questions. Candidate #6 was invited to the table and given the opportunity to make an opening statement. His introduction was to read the letter of interest he submitted. He viewed the role of the Town Council as the legislative branch of town government and provided representation and oversight to the citizens. They also vote ordinances. He has no potential conflicts of interest. Councilor Mathews asked if the candidate still plows for the town. Candidate #6 responded no. He reported he is an active voter. He would advocate increased voter participation by getting out to the constituents. The top three challenges today are communication, the budget in potentially detrimental times, and the third would be positive momentum in development with the proper resources at Union Point.

His volunteerism includes Weymouth Youth Soccer, many events as a police officer, self-defense instructor to seniors, scouts, canine demonstrations, and fund-raising. He is a lifelong resident, and concerned with the way the town is run and people are treated. He is concerned with the schools; the seniors, and veterans in town. He has life learned skills and acquiring knowledge in the trades, and police, and knows the charter and ordinances. He plowed for the town in District 6- over 164 streets and right of ways, so is very knowledgeable of the territory and the people. He noted he always tries to do the right thing and be fair and maintain the respect of the citizens. The current state of Union Point includes litigation between former LStar and the SRA to further develop the sport bubbles, and the team Freejacks is delayed. The sports complex will provide family time and revenue to the town. 1200 homes and townhouses are occupied now. Looking to add 6-10M square feet of commercial development. He wants to see the commercial be developed and more public venues. The biggest part of the project is the water solution, whether it comes from MWRA or elsewhere. A federal infrastructure bill could possibly reach out to appropriate those funds.

He approves his name may be disclosed as an applicant, and authorizes the release of executive session minutes after the selection process is complete.

Once Candidate #6 was excused, the committee discussed his responses, his knowledge of the district and his qualifications.

Vice Chair Mathews noted this candidate interviewed the best so far. He hit a home run with the boundaries, knew the area and was well informed about the base. He has extensive volunteer experience, although he's not as strong on the top 3 challenges. He was also the first to mention the code of ordinances and charter. Councilor Heffernan noted he knew the district and the history of Union Point; he would have liked to hear the visions he had. He also suggested that all of the details disclosed should be checked with the record. He did not bring up Columbian Square or Route 18. Councilor Happel noted he is committed to the veterans. Councilor Kiely noted it appeared he was reading from notes and is committed to Weymouth. She noted no candidate yet has brought up South Shore Hospital. Chair Molisse reported he was well prepared.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Mathews to come out of Executive Session for the purpose of adjournment and was seconded by Councilor Kiely. A roll call vote was taken: Councilor Happel- Yes, Councilor Heffernan- Yes, Councilor Kiely- Yes, Vice Chair Mathews- Yes, Chair Molisse-Yes. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:21 PM, a motion was made by Vice Chair Mathews to come out of Executive Session for the purpose of adjournment and was seconded by Councilor Kiely. A roll call vote was taken: Councilor Happel- Yes, Councilor Heffernan- Yes, Councilor Kiely- Yes, Vice Chair Mathews- Yes, Chair Molisse-Yes. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Barker, Recording Secretary.

Approved by as Chair of the District Six Councilor Search Committee.
Voted unanimously on 7 July 2020