

**WEYMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL**  
**District 6 Councilor Search Committee**  
**Executive Session**  
**May 13, 2020, Thursday**  
**VIA ZOOM #868 4631 2384**

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

Chair Molisse called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

A roll call was taken by the Town Clerk– Councilor Happel- present, Councilor Heffernan-present, Councilor Kiely, Vice Chair Mathews-present, Chair Molisse-present.

A motion was made by Councilor Mathews and seconded by Councilor Kiely to enter into Executive Session. A roll call was taken by the Town Clerk– Councilor Happel- yes, Councilor Heffernan-yes, Councilor Kiely-yes, Vice Chair Mathews-yes, Chair Molisse-yes.

Executive Session

Chair Molisse read the following statements to the candidates at the start of the 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 candidate:

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 # 7

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 #7 responded "Yes" to both questions. Candidate # 7 was invited to make a brief statement regarding his interest in the position. He reported he hasn't worked in politics recently, but worked with President Reagan's press secretary in the past. He is also a volunteer at Fairing Woods candidates' events. He wants the best for his aspiring family and the neighborhood. He would plan to get to know the constituents and work in team with other Councilors and the town. He has no potential conflicts that could impact the role. He wants to make an impact on the community and would use his experience in journalism to get to know people. He is unsure where the Union Point development

stands, but is interested in becoming involved. He has an open-minded vision; he would want to talk to all parties before deciding the best course of action. He believes the top three challenges facing the municipality today are the environment, which is very polarizing, and managing constituents without alienating them. He and his partner both work in animal care and volunteer to assist with dog-walking and landscaping and offered to drive voters to the polls on election day, although he didn't have a lot of takers. He reviewed his voter record and would entertain holding events to meet the constituents. He reported he is familiar with the map of District 6 but not necessarily the streets. He would research if chosen. He approved that his name may be disclosed as an applicant, and authorizes the release of executive session minutes after the selection process is complete.

Once Candidate #7 was excused, the committee discussed his responses, his knowledge of the district and his qualifications. Councilor Mathews said he seems like a nice guy, but his knowledge of the issues in the district are limited. He didn't respond as well as some of the other candidates and needs to spend more time learning the issues. Councilor Heffernan agreed. He noted although he seems well meaning, he is still getting immersed in the community. They need someone who can jump in running. Also, he didn't know the boundaries of the district or the role of the Council. His response was more of an opinion; not definitive. Councilor Happel noted this is the seventh interview conducted and there still has been no mention of Columbian Square. Councilor Kiely reported he didn't answer any question correctly. He was well meaning, but has some work to do. Chair Molisse agreed he needed more work and needs to become more educated on the district issues.

#### Candidate # 8 –

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 #8 responded "Yes" to both questions.

Candidate #8 was invited to make a brief statement regarding his interest in the position. He reported he is not a lifelong resident; he moved here and is raising five children in WPS. He didn't expect there to be 12 candidates. He is interested in representing the district and will do whatever he can to make it a great place to raise a family. He is Treasurer of the Hamilton Primary School. His volunteer work includes parent council, and as a baseball coach he got to meet many people volunteering in the community. He has a good feel for what is going on in his neck of the woods. He has voted in every election except when he may have pulled an absentee ballot due to travel. He noted there are two main areas in the district; Pond Plain and Union Point. Union Street also has a

neighborhood association and he is a member of the Pond Plain Improvement Association and always saw former Councilor Smart at meetings there. He would continue that. He has already been out talking to the constituents and works with the Hamilton School families. There are several apartment buildings and it's a fairly residential district. He is interested in the position because he cares about the future of the community. He reported his knowledge of the Union Point development is that he understood there were financial issues. It's complex with multiple developers and a hodgepodge of parcels auctioned. He has not heard anything of commercial development and with all the land, there is a need for some commercial component, not just to benefit the Union Point residents but all of Weymouth.

Candidate # 8 believes the top challenges facing them is funding and he cited the Nash School controversy over the last few weeks. No one wants cuts, but there are limited resources. It is also making tough decisions regarding resources; with the library, the compressor station, etc. The Council often has more information than the general public. It's a big commitment; not a full-time job, but one is expected not to take it lightly. It's one he would willingly take on. His volunteer service includes coaching in Cal Ripken Baseball, active in the Hamilton School and on the Parent Council Board. He views the role of the Town Council as a check on the power of the Mayor and serving as a representative with the government. He noticed meetings are not very well attended. One of the biggest challenges with the Union Point development is that it has so many layers but they don't seem to have a say. His only potential conflict of interest is his position with the Hamilton Parent Council; he would have to step down. He described the boundaries of the district broadly; Union Street, Pond, Thicket, the triangle around Columbian, and down Pine Street to District 5.

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

Once Candidate #8 was excused, the committee discussed his responses, his knowledge of the district and the issues.

Councilor Mathews reported he liked his attitude and he seems to know a lot; liked how he understood the strong mayoral form of government. He is active in school, sports, and seems to know a bit about the base and boundaries. He felt the candidate was too tough on himself in his opening remarks. Overall, it was a fairly good job. Councilor Heffernan suggested he is one of the more well-rounded candidates. Everything came together: family, active member of a civic association and wants to emulate what Mr. Smart did in that role. He has a grasp in general of the boundaries. He is more of a generalist, and that is what is needed in the role. He is knowledgeable of the topics facing the Council. Councilor Happel reported he was very impressed with community volunteer work and getting the pulse of the citizens. He was well spoken. Councilor Kiely noted he was the most well rounded she's heard. He interviewed well, which can be difficult at times. Overall, he gave a reasonable answer to every question. It's indicative of the commitment he already has shown to Weymouth. Chair Molisse agreed; he hit on all issues, has great financial experience, is well spoken and presented himself well.

Candidate # 9

Chair Molisse asked:

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*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 #9 responded “Yes” to both questions.

Candidate # 9 thanked the members for their service and noted with the size and scope of government, this proves the importance of every level of government. He’s lived in Weymouth 30 years, and raised 3 children. The town has been very good to him. He’s had a great deal of volunteering experience. While he said he’s not the most intelligent, he is a hard worker and has been fortunate in his opportunities. He reviewed his education and work experiences (MBTA). If selected, he would count on teamwork and knowledge of the Councilors. The position interests him because he has enjoyed his time in Weymouth and he is at a point in his career to be able to give back in a different capacity. He said Mr. Smart was the gold standard. In his work experience with the MBTA, he has worked with people, been in public safety, fiduciary matters and is prepared well for this. He is also on the board of a credit union and he takes that seriously – it’s an elected position and he feels this makes him a better candidate. He will be a good teammate. He has used Union Point as an extension of his backyard. He believed the need to get a water / sewer solution there is impeding progress. Collectively, the town and District 6 would benefit from commercial development there. It doesn’t yet have a neighborhood feel, because many general things are missing. It was creative getting movies filmed there, but the staging is being defaced. There are still sections that have to be remediated by the Navy and the environmental issues need to be looked at.

He said the top challenges facing the municipality are the impact of the ongoing pandemic and the financial constraints as a result, and the pilot program with South Shore Hospital. It’s a huge employer and the pilot could be a revenue generator. It’s an anchor for the community and on new homebuyer checklists. The third challenge would be constituent issues such as water/sewer on Union Point, the Columbian Square traffic study and supporting the businesses there. How much better would it be if traffic calming measures were put in place? He would be interested in working with planning. The infrastructure, particularly the Route 18 widening has taken some time. He would hear the concerns with MassDOT and the citizens. Union Point is an MBTA customer, the development has made the service vexing. He is well aware the MBTA can’t snap their fingers and accomplish a remedy, but it has to listen to the concerns of the users in the area.

He reviewed his volunteer service- as a coach, CYO coordinator in Boston, and involvement in the Pond Plain Improvement Association. He enjoys volunteering and getting to know people. He has read the charter, and focused on the legislative aspects. The Council chooses a Town Clerk, and approves officers, as well as the budget. The Council functions are incredibly important. It involves constituent services and attending BZA and conservation meetings and addressing public safety issues. He has no conflicts of interest. He has voted in every election in which he was here. Sometimes public safety emergencies prevented him from voting.

He noted this is a different time to facilitate constituent concerns than before the pandemic. He appreciated the work Mr. Smart has done and he hopes to model it. He will look to his peers for best practices and will have a dialog with the various neighborhood venues to determine the best platform to stay connected. It's important the people in the district are heard. He is also familiar with the streets and boundaries and reviewed them for the committee.

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

Once Candidate #9 was excused, the committee discussed his responses, his knowledge of the district. Councilor Mathews noted he was the most articulate and knowledgeable of the candidates. He was personable and touched on all the answers and was honest about missing votes because of his job. Councilor Heffernan reported he was extremely impressed as he was more than proficient across every spectrum. He showed a willingness to learn and he is up to date with the issues. He is ready to jump in and they will need that in a successful candidate. Councilor Happel reported that he was very impressed; with his educational background and he was the first candidate to discuss Columbian Square, the hospital, the pandemic and the commuter train overcrowding. Councilor Kiely reported that he is the most well rounded candidate. He brings an immense amount of knowledge and has worked his way up with perseverance and has a good skill set for the Town Council. Chair Molisse agreed; he is knowledgeable on the district and was the first to speak on the Columbian Square business association and South Shore Hospital. He presented very well and could bring a lot to the table.

#### Candidate # 10

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?*

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Candidate #10 responded "Yes" to both questions.

Candidate #10 was invited to present an opening statement. He reported he saw the ad for Councilor and decided to apply for it. He reported that the COVID-19 pandemic, growth of the town and conflicts with education, are the top challenges facing the town. He has no experience with volunteer work. He reported he votes in every election. To facilitate constituent concerns, he would talk to all parties, and would like to get out in the public more. He noted there have been a lot of changes in the town, and he would like to be more active and involved. He stated there is a third party in charge at Union Point and it is supposed to be more than just residential development, but it is putting more of a burden on the town. There is a limited water supply and a lot of wasted land. they put a road in through to Rockland but have not brought any industrial development and he would like to see that change. He is new and interested to see what the Councilors do. He has no conflicts of interest and is unsure of the exact boundaries of the district.

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

Once Candidate #10 was excused, the committee discussed his responses, and his knowledge of the district. Councilor Mathews noted he wants to get more involved but doesn't have the knowledge to be a candidate. He was honest about his lack of experience and does not have the experience to be the candidate. Councilor Kiely suggested he is well intentioned. He did not provide a resume and does not have the knowledge or the skillset for the seat. Councilor Happel suggested he would be a good candidate for a board. Without a grasp of the issues, he would be in over his head. Councilor Heffernan noted they will need to have the person with the most experience to step up for the next eighteen months. They need someone with a wealth of knowledge. Chair Molisse said his heart is in the right place, but he would do better to get involved in some civic activities.

#### Candidate # 11

Chair Molisse asked:

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*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 #11 responded "Yes" to both questions.

Candidate # 11 reported he appreciated the opportunity. He is from Philadelphia, with a background in publishing and a Masters in journalism. He would serve the people by informing them of what is going on in their community, country and world. He was a senior writer for a magazine. His family involvement is through his child and he plays on a senior baseball league. He has walked with SSH walk with Hospice, was involved in Toys for Tots, and ran in Coops Troops 5K. He was part of a team project to donate equipment to underserved countries. He sees this as a good opportunity to get involved.

He has no background in politics, but a drive to succeed, a proven track record, and a desire to serve the community. As a reporter, he covered local meetings. He understands the Council's role is as the legislative arm of the local community. He will advocate and protect the interest of the community and spend his time in an efficient manner. He has no potential conflicts of interest. He is looking for more ways to get involved, and make an impact closer to home and he learns new things quickly. He stated the Union Point development is in poor shape and looking for a new developer to take over. They need to look to remediate some of the pollution problems, and there is still a lot remaining to do. Any agreement with a developer must have a clear path forward as to how it is remediated.

The top issues facing the town are the budget constraints, the lockdown and making sure people have the most up to date and accurate information so it isn't extended. There needs to be a balance struck between competing interests. People want low taxes but also want great schools and public services. He does not have as much volunteer service as his career has been his primary focus. He is an active voter and shows up to each and every election. He would facilitate constituent services by maintaining a high profile on social media. He has looked at the map and knows where the landmarks are in the district but would rely on GPS for specifics.

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

Once Candidate #11 was excused, the committee discussed his responses, his knowledge of the issues and the district. Councilor Mathews liked him; he was articulate but not in the top tier of candidates. He liked that he was honest that he didn't know some answers.

Councilor Heffernan commended the candidate for expressing an interest, but some of the most compelling candidates have more experience. He may have a wealth of knowledge but he didn't connect it the seat. Councilor Happel said he was disappointed that the Union Point question wasn't answered well. He didn't really have a good grasp of the issues in District 6. Councilor Kiely noted his response about municipal officials was reasonably good; he is clearly educated but a notch below top tier. Chair Molisse wished he was more knowledgeable about the District 6 issues.

Councilor Mathews reported that candidate 12 withdrew his name and was therefore not interviewed.

Chair Molisse said it was an interesting night. It was nice to see strong candidates in the second round.

Councilor Kiely reported she interviews often for Eversource, and not everyone interviews well. They have to look at the overall picture; the interview, the resume, etc. They need a good team player. Candidates 8 and 9 really stood out; both were well-rounded, answered well and were the best overall.



Councilor Heffernan agreed; Councilor Smart's seat must be filled for 18 months, heading into an unprecedented time. They need a generalist who can step in. There were some compelling candidates and all were well intentioned. As they head into the next election cycle, they need someone to fill that spot to the same standard.

Councilor Mathews noted it was good to interview all of the candidates. #9 stood out the best. In the next tier he would rank candidates 1, 6 and 8.

Councilor Heffernan said candidate 9 was the best by far, and 8, 1, and 6 were on the next lower tier.

Chair Molisse said 9 was over the top; he hit on all questions. He can come in fresh and hit the ground running. He felt the same for 8- he was committed and knowledgeable with good all around experience. Candidate 9 is in a different phase of life and has the time to commit. Candidate 6 presented himself well and knew the town.

Councilor Kiely suggested it's a big commitment for someone with a young family and that needs to be taken into consideration. Councilor Heffernan agreed with Councilor Mathews and Happel; this was a large group with a lot of diverse experience. He was impressed with 8 and 9 and candidates 1 and 6 stood out from the first night's group. Chair Molisse agreed some candidates don't interview well, but brought good credentials to the table. He would like to narrow down to two candidates to bring before the Council so they don't drag out the process. Councilor Mathews reported that the last time they narrowed to the top candidates to narrow the field and then voted on the finalists. Solicitor Callanan reported the only requirement is they have to recommend at least two candidates to move forward. Councilor Molisse reminded the committee once they are done they also need to vote to release the executive session minutes.

A motion was made by Councilor Mathews to recommend candidates 1, 6, 8 and 9 for consideration. Councilor Heffernan seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken:- Councilor Happel- Yes, Councilor Heffernan-Yes Councilor Kiely -Yes, Vice Chair Mathews-Yes, Chair Molisse- Yes. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

A motion was made by Councilor Kiely to advance candidates 8 and 9 to the full Town Council for consideration. Councilor Heffernan seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken:- Councilor Happel- Yes, Councilor Heffernan-Yes Councilor Kiely -Yes, Vice Chair Mathews-Yes, Chair Molisse- Yes. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

A motion was made by Councilor Mathews to delegate the approval of the minutes of the executive session meetings 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.

Councilor Kiely asked what happens if the Council vote is a tie? Solicitor Callanan responded that he will get a definitive response. Usually a majority of the quorum is required or the motion doesn't advance.

Chair Molisse thanked the participants for their deliberation.

#### ADJOURNMENT

At 9:21 PM, a motion was made by Councilor 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.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Barker, Recording Secretary.

Approved by Chairman Molisse-District 6 Councilor Search Committee

DRAFT