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July 17, 2018

c/o Mr. Mike Jones , Town Mgr.  
Town of Castleton Select Board (SB)  
PO. Box 727 Castleton VT 05773

RE: Response to the recent Town Planning Commission (PC) actions regarding the Town Zoning Administrator (ZA)  
This is to be submitted into the Minutes of the Select Board Meeting of 7/23/2018

To the Castleton Select Board;

**It's time to (again) Clear the Record on Issues and Claims made against the Zoning Administrator** for the Town of Castleton. Having processed over 250 permits in the past 4.6 years as ZA, I know of less than five complaints (including those Denied a permit) by property Owners directly involved in a Permit application. I have submitted detailed explanations on any issue or complaint the PC or SB has requested. Thus, it is fair that I receive a detailed list of the alleged numerous complaints by the PC (*per PC 7/10/18 Minutes*), that have apparently "taken away unfair time from their duties" (*quote from Rutland Herald's article published 6/28/2018*). This opposition to the work of the ZA, and apparently extending to the Development Review Board (DRB) clearly originates from a small core of individuals. These individuals have stated their personal agendas to others many times, and often under the "cover" of Executive Sessions.

**Following are relative FACTS, often being omitted from the PC Minutes and reports issued to the News Medias:**

1. The SB Chairman apparently directed (no Motion or vote by the SB in the Minutes) on 4/4/2017 to send an unspecified complaint of ZA actions to the PC to review. Subsequently, I attended two Executive Sessions of the PC, **both chaired by J. Bruno**. Being the Chair of both the SB and the PC, ordering and then controlling the investigating panel is a clear conflict of the Castleton Select Board Rules of Procedure (3/13/17). Other PC members involved were **J. Currie**, and **B. Longtin** (as future Chairs with possible conflicts).
2. The last official communication by the SB to this ZA since our meeting on December 11, 2017 resulted in a MEMO, dated 1/22/2018, and signed by **J. Bruno** as Chairman (copy enclosed). It relayed new "guidelines" to be implemented; but no disciplinary action, as recommended by the Planning Commission. No charges against the ZA for performance were made.
3. Per verbal **instruction by J. Bruno**, I was since required to provide a daily accounting for the time that I invoiced weekly (time sheet). I believe I am the only Town employee that the SB Chairman has demanded such reporting, but I have complied as requested.
4. It is uncertain that SB listened to the recording of the 2/20/18 DRB meeting. It would have clarified that my comments regarding V. Waldren staying in the room during Deliberative Session **were directed to the regular DRB members, and not the recording secretary**. I've since publicly apologized to Ms. Waldren for any misunderstanding regarding my concerns to the DRB about who should exist or stay at Deliberative Sessions. *My comments were intended to remind the DRB of the SB's 1/22/18's "guidelines"*.
5. In the current communication from the PC to the SB, **Mr. Bruno** made another unfounded statement, "*that the SB has asked the ZA to abstain from DRB meetings*". Please check the SB Board MEMO of 1/22/18, to ascertain what the SB actually issued are guidelines to the ZA and DRB. As party to an Appeal of a ZA Decision, the ZA has to participate in a Public Hearing, which is why the DRB usually holds their Hearings.
6. The 6/12/18 PC complaint submitted to the SB by the Planning Commission, and subsequent Press Release to the Media was without any discussions between the SB, PC, or ZA for over six months. No advance Notice was sent to the ZA. If this press release was not approved by the SB, this is a **blatant effort by a few self-serving individuals on the PC to discredit my service to the entire Community**.

7. Both the DRB and the ZA have complied with the SB Memo of 1/22/18, responding to all subsequent requests. However, neither the Select Board or the Planning Commission has made any effort to meet with this Zoning Administrator or the DRB directly since this January.
8. It is obvious to many in the Castleton community that the current dysfunction exists between these Appropriate Municipal Panels (AMP's) due to certain Individual's demands for control or personal gain.
9. The ZA has been accused by the PC as having influential control over the DRB. This panel of retired professionals volunteer their time, just as the PC members do. Unlike some current members of the PC, the DRB members have had years serving the Town on AMP's. They do not seek personal control or possible employment by the Town. At the least, the DRB deserves the same respect as any other Municipal Panels. The unfounded accusations by certain "vocal" members of the PC appears intended to influence their own agenda on their other Panel Members.
10. The PC has not requested the participation of the DRB or the ZA in the updating of the Town Plan or the Zoning Ordinance. This ignores the considerable input and experience of both these Parties, and who have to actually administer the Rules the PC members are drafting. The PC's open hostility and lack of any effort to communicate or cooperate with the DRB and ZA will only lead to further government chaos and poor regulations.
11. Even worse than individual efforts to control this Community, is the persistent, irresponsible, and archaic notion by a certain (fortunately) minority that there is still a class distinction between "Natives" and "Flatlanders". The average birth rate continues to fall, VT's Milleniums are moving to better employment areas (VT was recently rated by Forbes as 48<sup>th</sup> in the country for its business climate), and VT will soon have the "oldest" population in the country. Castleton should be working to attract new populations, plan for a changing population, and not resist new social ways of life. Key individuals in the government structure have openly refused to accept this concept.

**IN CONCLUSION:**

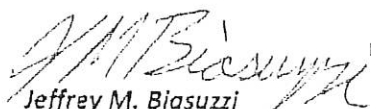
Since the PC's publicity efforts, I have received a number of calls of support for my work as ZA from prominent Residents. This Zoning Administrator is prepared to defend his Decisions, on any Issue and in Court if necessary.

However, I have always maintained that the ZA assignment should not be mired in local politics, which has evolved to be un-avoidable. I do not believe this is a productive way to spend my time, and does not assist the Town of Castleton in its efforts to improve the current situation. **To do this, I would recommend a "Clean Slate" dismissal of ALL Persons that are an apparent and key sources of contrived controversy.**

Accordingly, this is my **Letter of Resignation as Castleton's Zoning Administrator**. I am willing to work Tuesdays (only) until July 31, 2018, to assist your replacement ZA in the transition process, and finalize any outstanding Permit Applications. I will not process any new applications received on/after 7/17/2018. I am willing to assist the Town's ZA or DRB after this date, on a Consultant basis and for a Fee schedule to be agreed upon, until the Town can transition to new personnel.

Besides the interaction with the many Property Owners and Legal Professionals I have encountered over my tenure, I will miss most the regular interaction and assistance by Office and Department Heads (past and present) and Staff. You have been a memorable assembly of talented Folks to work with. This is especially true of Jim Leamy, with whom I have shared a "Bull Pen" with since the beginning. I am grateful to ALL for sharing your experience and knowledge.

Sincerely,

  
Jeffrey M. Biasuzzi

Cc: file