

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BOARD & COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS

I. Purpose

As our terms on the Board of Selectmen come to a close, we respectfully submit these best-practice recommendations to strengthen the Town's process for appointing members to boards and commissions. These suggestions are intended to increase transparency and predictability, reduce recurring disputes, ensure consistent compliance with state law, protect the integrity of minority representation, expand opportunities for Unaffiliated voters, and enhance long-term public trust in Town governance.

These recommendations are nonpartisan and are meant to serve any future Board, regardless of which party holds a majority.

II. Background and Observed Challenges

Over multiple terms and across changes in Board composition, several recurring process challenges have emerged:

1. Lack of a standardized and publicly visible appointment process, including the absence of nominees on published agendas prior to a vote.
2. Inconsistent vetting and nomination procedures, sometimes resulting in the last-minute appearance of names for consideration.
3. Ambiguity regarding who nominates candidates to minority-representation seats and the order in which nominations are taken up.
4. Longstanding public concern about fairness and missed opportunities for residents interested in serving.

III. Historical Precedent in Woodbridge

In the 1970s, the Board of Selectmen appears to have utilized a Nominating Subcommittee to evaluate candidates for appointed boards and commissions. Names for consideration could be submitted by either Town Committee or come directly from residents seeking appointment, regardless of voter registration affiliation. The Subcommittee provided a venue to focus on the qualifications of the candidates. It consisted of three Selectmen and appears to have purposefully not included the First Selectman. This structure supported balanced representation and helped produce orderly, transparent appointment recommendations.

IV. Recommendations

1. Reestablish a three-member Nominating Subcommittee consistent with historic practice, excluding the First Selectman.
2. Standardize and publicize the appointment process, ensuring adequate notice, inclusion of nominees on agendas, and consistent vetting of all applicants.

3. Protect the integrity of minority-representation seats, including clear procedures for how nominations for those seats are advanced and considered.
4. Create a regular appointment calendar with sufficient lead time to allow for advertising vacancies, reviewing applications, and avoiding last-minute appointments.

V. Benefits of Adopting These Recommendations

Implementing these reforms will increase public trust and transparency, reduce unnecessary conflict, ensure compliance with minority-representation requirements, provide equitable access for Unaffiliated and minority-party applicants, and build a stable system that will serve future Boards regardless of political composition.

VI. Closing

We offer these recommendations in good faith and with deep appreciation for the importance of strong, fair, and transparent appointment processes in maintaining public confidence in Town government.

Respectfully submitted,



Sheila McCreven, Selectman
Elected on the Democratic Party line
Term ending 12/31/25



David Vogel, Selectman
Elected on the Republican Party line
Term ending 12/31/25