

To: Calais Development Review Board (DRB)

From: Dot Helling

Date: April 9, 2024

Re: Recent actions of the Calais Selectboard (SB) regarding DRB appointments

I hereby request the DRB to take the following actions:

- (1) Ask the SB to rescind its vote on March 25 regarding DRB reappointments and new appointments.
- (2) Ask the SB to follow proper procedure in making said appointments and to reinstate myself and Stephanie Kaplan as full DRB members for another three-year term.
- (3) Ask the SB to publicly apologize to myself and Kaplan and to this Board for the actions taken on March 25.
- (4) Ask the SB to establish procedures, with input from our boards and commissions, to ensure that what has happened does not occur again in the future.

In support of these requests, I present the following:

- (1) On March 25 the DRB did not follow the open meeting law, or the public information act as follows:
 - (a) Before going into executive session, the SB did not specifically state on the record the specific reasons for going into session, i.e. to recomposite the DRB;
 - (b) The reasons given on the record by Chair Anne Winchester for going into executive session were specious and untrue, i.e. that there were “more applicants than seats” and applicants they “do not know;”
 - (c) Before the March 25 meeting the SB did not notify or give me or Stephanie Kaplan notice that our positions were in jeopardy, nor did they give us or the DRB an opportunity to address concerns about our service or the DRB’s direction – instead they voted to fill positions contrary to what was publicly posted;
 - (d) The SB invited Town Administrator Kari Bradley, the husband of one of the DRB applicants, to participate in the executive session, a clear conflict of interest; and
 - (e) When the SB came out of executive session, they voted to recompose the DRB which included the demotion of myself and Kaplan but *did not explain its reasons for the decision, as is required by statute.*
- (2) Whether or not the SB acted in compliance with existing laws and procedure, which I contend it did not, what the SB certainly did *not* do was follow a transparent and democratic process. Instead, its actions were morally wrong, underhanded, and inconsistent with the way we do business in Calais. Their back-room tactics and disrespect are a disincentive for volunteers to serve the public.

The SB mishandled this matter on many different levels. I feel it is important for you to understand the back story and the way this all went down. I have prepared and will disseminate to each of you and for the record a written Chronology of my experience and some further thoughts, with citations, which I hope you will read in support of this request. I will forward your acting clerk an electronic copy after this meeting for inclusion in the minutes and posting on the Town website. Thank you.