

# THE BEDFORD CITIZEN

## **Shawn Hanegan – Candidate for Planning Board**

*Incumbent and Caucus Nominee*



### **Events:**

No events scheduled

### **Contact information:**

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## **Candidate Q&A – February 18, 2016**

### **What major challenges do you expect to face during the next three years?**

As I mentioned in my campaign statement, the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan is very important to our town's future, and will take up a lot of the Board's focus in the next three years. What that will involve is taking one or two major zoning bylaws changes to Town Meeting at a time, after the changes have been fully researched, compared to neighboring towns, and public feedback has been gathered and given consideration. The Board will try to move quickly on these items, ensuring they are fully vetted and that the long range consequences are understood. In some cases, we may have to address zoning changes faster than we anticipated, as was the case with the petitioner's article to Town Meeting concerning the proposed re-zoning of the front portion of the Bedford Marketplace. I do believe that over the next three years, we will have made substantial progress to putting in place the basis by which the Comprehensive Plan vision will unfold.

Another major challenge is the workload facing the Board and especially the staff. Our three person staff is constantly faced with high pressure trying to get all the facts to prepare Board members for meetings so that we are ready for each issue that comes before us. We are in the process of requesting an additional person to take minutes at our meetings to help free up some staff time, and help us balance the workload situation.

In my position on the Planning Board, I always strive to serve the best interests of the town, and realize there are some cases where we cannot satisfy everyone. I am open to hearing comments and suggestions, so please feel free to contact me.

### **Beyond changing zoning bylaws, how can the Planning Board strengthen the character of Bedford's built environment, sharpen a vision for Bedford's village center and invigorate the Great Road?**

Besides proposing zoning bylaw changes to Town Meeting and holding public hearings on zoning changes proposed by others, the Planning Board is responsible for reviewing development proposals involving subdivisions, and conducting site plan reviews on large developments. One of the effects of having a built environment is that new development proposals often involve squeezing new homes into relatively modest size parcels of land. Although developers often have the ability by right to build such homes, the Planning Board can use its review process to help lessen the impact on neighborhoods and thus preserve our small town character. One such example of this is the use of cluster subdivisions, where appropriate, which help to preserve open space. Our review process also involves examining drainage, lighting, access and egress, parking, landscaping, signage, and connection to pedestrian trails and sidewalks. Each case we review is an opportunity to improve the development and thereby strengthen the town.

Regarding the village center and the Great Road, the Comprehensive Plan illustrates a vision of four different center areas (three on the Great Road and the Depot area) connected by walking and bicycle access, with amenities that are both different and complementary to each other. The Great Road has been developed in different pieces over the years, and does not present a consistent character. Some areas of the Great Road are dated and in need of refreshing. Because of this, the Board is proposing to the upcoming Town Meeting that the town hires a consultant for an 18-month period to study the Great Road and work with the Planning Board to implement best practices identified in the study. As development cases involving these areas come before the Board, we can encourage more appropriate architecture, and redesigns that work for walking and biking as well as automotive traffic.

### **2016 Citizen's Caucus Statement**

Thank you, Lisa, for that excellent nomination speech. Thank you also to all of you for being here. As Lisa mentioned, I've lived in town with my family since 2011. One thing that I have learned and become convinced about during that time is that Bedford is a great town. With its

fabulous school system, great services, large number of interested citizens, and its small town character, I couldn't be happier with a place to raise my children in.

Being a great town, however, is not something that is earned once, put on the shelf, and automatically kept forever. It must be constantly renewed as times change and new challenges are faced. I am proud to have been a part of that process the last four years, and ask for your support to continue on into a second full term on the Planning Board.

It has been a true pleasure serving on the Board. My fellow Board members are conscientious, caring, and ultimate professionals, and I am very proud of the way we function together. We are also blessed with an incredibly talented and diligent staff.

During my first term on the Board, we created a Comprehensive Plan, a vision for the town's future based on extensive public outreach, and have begun to implement it. With a second term on the Board, I plan to continue the work of implementing the Comprehensive Plan. In some ways, the implementation is harder than the crafting of the plan. For laws and regulations are complex and intertwined with many other factors, and often lead to unintended consequences. I will draw from my background in housing related volunteer work and my paid work in the engineering of systems to help understand the consequences of changes in zoning laws in order to ensure that changes we propose will adequately provide the basis in law for the vision of the Plan to unfold. I will continue the work of ensuring we have an adequate business base to relieve pressure on residential tax rates. I will continue to work on making the town more pedestrian and bicycle friendly. I will also never forget that a person's primary home is their most important investment, and work to help ensure new developments are compatible with neighborhoods.

People sometimes ask why I want to run for and be on the Planning Board. I enjoy being a part of this town's government, and I want to help make sure that someone will stand up here 5, 10, or 20 years from now and also state that Bedford is a great town. I ask for your support here tonight and your vote on March 12. Thank you.

**[Read Shawn Hanegan's Candidate Announcement in the Bedford Citizen](#)**