

A Call to Community Service

Several weeks ago I, along with the whole Town of Durham, lost a dear friend, Mr. Bill Lintz. For those of you who knew Bill personally, you knew him as a gentle, emotional, faithful, thoughtful, wonderful man. Some of you may only know him as the white-haired man at all the town meetings. Bill also served his country as a WWII vet, was knowledgeable of and active in our local government and a steady attendee at town meetings. As I was sitting at his memorial service I got to thinking of all the wonderful people with whom I had the pleasure of shared friendship and public service and who are now gone; Marjorie Hatch, Roger Newton, Charlie Wimler, Ike Kerschner, Bob White and others who all had one thing in common. They were all actively involved in one way or another in our town government. Sometimes they served in elected positions, sometimes on appointed boards or commissions and sometimes just as active members of our town meeting.

That morning I also wondered, who among us would take their place, for after all, the town must endure. Who among us is willing to come to board and commission meetings and hold elected officials accountable, who among us will give up our all too limited personal time to volunteer to serve and who among us will participate enough to preserve our uniquely democratic form of government? The Town Meeting is a meeting of our legislative body. Who comprises our legislative body? All registered voters and those who own property valued at more than \$1,000. If you just said, "Wow, that's a lot of people", you are right. You all have a vote in matters legally determined by the legislative body. Yet, only a handful of people attend the town meeting and those are the people making decisions for you. I am acutely aware of how busy everyone is today; after all, many of us work two jobs in one and care for multi generations of family members. However, I ask you to at least pay attention to the agendas and participate when you can.

Agendas and minutes of all meetings are on our website www.townofdurhamct.org. If you are not inclined to use the internet, the agendas are also posted on the bulletin board at the town hall and minutes filed with the Town Clerk. All board and commission meetings are open to the public and most allow a time for public comment. If you find that you have some free time to serve on a board or commission, please contact my office. Some boards are appointed, some are elected. Currently we have vacancies on the Economic Development Commission, Ethics Commission and Historic District Commission. If these boards don't interest you, still call me. I will keep your name and interests on file if a vacancy occurs (and they do for many reasons). In the meantime, please attend the meetings of the boards that interest you. There is plenty of opportunity for the public to provide input.

So, farewell Bill, rest in peace Marge, Roger, Charlie, Ike and Bob and give us the strength and courage to care for the town you loved and cared for so well.