

Last week the Durham Planning & Zoning Commission granted my request to reconsider their position on the Housing for Economic Development Grant application. Although I still maintain that it would assist the Town of Durham in planning for the future, I respect their decision and their authority to make that decision. I will continue to research and seek out opportunities that may benefit the town and bring them forward through the proper channels. We will never all agree, but we must first be open to an opportunity before we can ever hope to benefit from that opportunity.

There are very few of us who have not been affected by the downturn of our economy. What is most frightening about this recession is how far-reaching it is. Each sector of our economy, every level of government and every region of our nation is in crisis. There is a phrase repeating all over Hartford and beyond – *we can't let a good crisis go to waste*. It sounds glib, but it is true. We would be foolish not to use this downturn as an opportunity to look at why, what and where and how we do business, whether it is our own personal business or the public's business. Everything has to be on the table and we must be creative. No more business as usual.

One of the concepts that will be debated in Hartford and across the nation is that of regionalizing services and sharing resources. I am intrigued by the notion and believe that there is a possibility that it can work under the right circumstances. The legislature is considering offering incentives for towns to collaborate and regionalize, however, we must watch that carefully. Incentives must not come with mandates. Towns should be able to choose, through enabling statutes, how and where it makes sense to create partnerships. The best thing the State can do is to fortify the regional organizations that already exist, not create a new level of bureaucracy.

I am proud that the Town of Durham is a partner in two successful regional efforts, DMIAAB and RSD13. We are meeting with the First Selectmen, Finance Directors and Public Works Directors from Haddam, Killingworth and Middlefield to discuss ways that we can share resources, expertise, purchasing power, etc. within the public works department to cut cost and create efficiencies. Who knows, maybe another successful partnership will be formed.

We must strengthen what works and fix or eliminate what doesn't. Most importantly, we must live within our means. I congratulate our board chairmen and department heads, most of who came in with level or reduced budgets in an effort to keep our taxes level. Will it be enough? We won't know for sure until we hear from the ST of CT and RSD13. Until then, everything and anything will be considered and we welcome your input.