

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
AUGUST 24, 1998

WILLARD DODGE: ...start off with telling you why we're here. John and I are here tonight to discuss an issue that we feel is very important to the Town, to the Planning Board and the people of New Boston, which relates to the appointment of people to, particularly the Planning Board, and no doubt we'll have to check the ZBA, but we'll take the Planning Board, that in this instance we determined that they are not residents of New Boston. We will show to you that two members of this Board are no longer residents of New Boston, one of them was not at the time of appointment. The result of that is we are concerned about the litigation that leaves the Town open to, based on State law and hope that as a result of this meeting we can rectify this matter and save the Town from any problems.

Now to do this is obviously fairly necessary to back up to the meeting of April 6th when these appointments took place. And certainly the Board will recall there was a great deal of controversy at that time relating to certain appointments that related to the Planning Board. ...if you deal with April 6th, as you recall there was a two to one vote to replace two long-term, experienced and valuable members of the Planning Board, Tommy Mohan and the other of course was Diane Manson. At that time there were in place two alternates that were also well experienced that were not elevated to those positions. Although two brand new members were put on that Board, one was an alternate to fill the empty alternate slot. The alternate slot was filled by Jeff Downing, the two permanent positions were filled by a fellow named Hans Hassel and Sue Martin.

Now, one of the issues if you recall I think I brought up at one of our meetings here quite some time ago, I believe it was directed particularly to Selectman Clay and Selectman Briere that back on the platform when you were running yourself for this position and were supported by Selectman Clay, you were very adamant about the fact that the Planning Board should change from a appointed position to a elected position, one of the reasons being that you'll have the people of New Boston get a chance to vote for those positions and voice their concern. Our concern at this time is what the pressure was to put these two members on the Board at this time ... election process next year...but particularly if they were going to be put on the Board, why weren't they put on as alternates so they could get the experience of other people? That didn't take place.

Now with the appointment and particularly we're most concerned with the appointment of Hans Hassel...tremendous amount of dissent from people here, experienced people of the town, other Board members as to...he was put on this Board. He was virtually unknown in the town, except with the exception of yourself. It was known from votes that he had never voted here, pretty certain by most he didn't physically reside here. Which brought up the question of residency, and the people who were questioning that...what was going to be done about it. I believe Selectman Briere that you answered that you worked with this man

for a couple of years and thought that he was a good member to put on the Board and knew him fairly well. And Selectman Clay, you answered something along the effect that on his application for the job, for the appointment to the Board that he said he was a resident of New Boston and that was good enough. Again questions have been asked from the people who are very active in this town and... I believe Selectman Strong responded to probably one of the worst appointments that took place in the town. To me that bears also a little bit of reflection. My experience of sitting on the Board for eight years, it always seemed important to me that the best thing that a Selectmen could do for this town was to operate under the ... that my job is to respond and act on behalf of the best of all of New Boston and not for a handful of people who have a chosen interest. Selectman Strong has always, in my estimation, worked that way. He has always acted for the best of New Boston, to the best of his ability. I look at him as one of the cornerstones that keeps this town and makes us what it is today.

JIM DODGE: ...minute please? We've got people clear out in the other hall. Can we move to a bigger...area? Can we go upstairs?

BO STRONG: Yes, as long as we ain't got more than fifty people.

JIM DODGE: There's not quite that many, but they are clear out in the other hall.

CLAY: I'd like to take a few minutes also, seeing we weren't aware of why you were coming Mr. Dodge, which would have helped to prepare us, to get some of the past minutes from some of the other minutes of the meetings so that we can also reflect back because you obviously have prepared. But by not giving Burton any information ahead of time, we are unable to be prepared without the minutes and I think we ought to pull those minutes up.

WILLARD DODGE: We have the minutes, but what we're asking you is to listen to what we have to say to you and then all of you will have to make your judgment based on that.

CLAY: Right, and we will listen, but I'm saying that it will be helpful I think for Burton, who's new, to have the minutes for him to be able to look at those as well.

(tape stopped)

BO STRONG: ...quiet we'll start the meeting again. Willard has the floor, eight o'clock he's asked to be on the agenda. I hope we can speak up because I'm hard of hearing and everybody else wants to hear too, probably.

WILLARD DODGE: I believe where I was at I was addressing the issue of Selectman Strong and he is what we consider a...I believe many others in town, cornerstone of this town, and what the town is all about. And the words he used to say I believe this is one of the worst appointments that's been made I think have a lot of bearing. And that's wisdom coming from a person with a tremendous amount of experience in this town that we feel the other Selectmen should have paid some attention to.

And again, if I may, I'll address John, if you have some issues here.

WILLARD DODGE: I've left an issue of the primary problem here.

Jeff Downing was appointed to the Board. Jeff Downing lived in New Boston at that time. He has since moved from New Boston back to Francestown to the house that he previously owned and previously lived in, and therefore is no longer a resident of the Town of New Boston. If I may, I'd like to...You now, 673:1 should be the last page, next to last page of that handout that you have. ...to establish a local land use board, and at the end of the first line, bottom of the page, shall be a resident of the town. Move on to the last page, 673:2, move down to sub-section 2(a), "The Selectmen shall designate one Selectman or administrative official of the town as an Ex-Officio member and appoint 4 or 6 members who are residents of the town." Residents again. On the agenda of you folks of the April 6th meeting, when you made these appointments, the last line on the Selectmen's agenda says: Note, appointees must be residents of the Town of New Boston to be considered. If you go back to the...part of that handout, Section 21-6, Description of a resident or inhabitant, the resident or inhabitant of both of this State and any city, town or local political subdivision of the State shall be a person who is domiciled or has his place of abode of both in this State, and in any city, town or political subdivision of the State, and who has through all of his actions demonstrated a current intent to designate that place of abode as his principal place of physical presence for the indefinite future...

Now this particular case of Jeff Downing, who...moved out but someday he's going to move back to the Town of New Boston, he owns property here and he intends to build a house. At present he does not qualify to this State law, ...he has moved out of town to the home he used to live in in a different town and is no longer qualified as a resident of the Town of New Boston. If you move to 21-6(a), it describes a residence, residence or residency shall mean a person's place of abode or domicile. The place of abode or domicile as designated by the person as his principal place of physical presence for the indefinite future to the exclusion of all others. Such residence or residency shall not be interrupted or lost by temporary absence from it if there's an intent to return to such residence or residency as the principal place of physical presence. Jeff Downing cannot return to his previous residence because he has sold it to someone else.

So we'll move beyond him to Hans Hassel. And again at that meeting there were various people of this town who recognized that Mr. Hassel was not a member of the Town of New Boston, did not live here, has not lived here. The Selectmen were asked to look into that, whereas two of you said you were satisfied with what he wrote on his application that he was a resident and the other because they knew him for a long time he was OK to be on the Board. I believe a day or two after that meeting he produced a license and a couple of checks that said the New Boston Joe English Road address. That is not proof of residence. Anybody can make up a check with any address on it, a NH license does not prove because you have an address on it, that's where you reside. The end result of that meeting after all the controversy and ... beginning or the end, the subject was brought up again, as you'll find if you check back in your minutes, was that the Selectmen

said that they would look into it. On April 6th.

Since that time, the Planning Board along with Selectmen Briere attended a training session in Manchester at the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission where Planning Coordinator Jim Tethers on more than one occasion, I believe two or three, explained that it's important that the Board who appoints **Planning Board members** makes sure that they are residents of the town.

So now we're into late August. Both people are still on that Board. We have to assume nothing has been done in that regard, but we have done something. Along with the people who ... at that meeting...follow-up on and try to get to the bottom of this, we took action that has determined that. We found that Hans Hassel at one point was living ... Elm Street, in Milford. He ended up at 31 Cambridge Street in Massachusetts. He's been living there... He leaves ... drives to Cambridge. We have determined that, we have followed him there. We have spent hours and hours and hours to be sure that we were **not doing something** not right here, to determine that he has never to our knowledge, spent the night, and now maybe he has, because we have not been there every night, but to our knowledge he has never spent the night at Joe English Road, which he offered you people as his address, his residence in the Town of New Boston. You have in front of you photographs showing the mailbox at 31 Lee Street, Cambridge, Mass., with the name Hassel on it. I have personally spoken to Mr. Hassel at that address, observing him going into that foyer, check that mailbox, use the keys to open the door and go up the stairs into the residence. We have observed his car parked behind the building.

Which brings up another point. Mr. Hassel drives a car registered to Waldorf Builders Estate Inc., with an address of 102 Ponemah Road, Amherst, NH, that's the business address. We have found nobody at that address, including people who have been there for five years, that know anything of Waldorf Estates or Hans Hassel. He has a NH drivers license with one date of birth, 4/6/44. He has a Massachusetts drivers license with 4/5/44. Violation of State law. The two licenses don't catch each other because if there's two different dates of birth they don't come up on the computer. That information has been passed on to the Division of Motor Vehicles and is being pursued at this time.

I guess basically that's the issue we have, we have stated to you, we have shown you what the law is, we've shown you, and I can assure you that if there's any people involved in this we are more than comfortable that he has not, was not and is not a resident of the Town of New Boston. And we are extremely disappointed that at least the members of the ..., people who have asked if he was a resident, that nothing has been done as soon as that ... determined. So what we have found through the history of investigating him is nothing but a chain of deceit that was woven to get where he is. John.

JOHN BUNTING: Thank you very much. Of the two appointments that we're concerned about, the one being Mr. Hassel, the other Mr. Downing's, the sequence of events leading up to Mr. Hassel's appointment is most troubling. Mr. Hassel is a person who has

from reading the article in the Boston Globe magazine tried to stay submerged for years. Suddenly he pops up just before the 1998 Town Meeting in March. It appears that just about the only people in New Boston that knew of him were his business partner, Joe Foistner, and Lois Briere who used to work with him. Within one month of the election Mr. Hassel was appointed to the Planning Board. I personally would not automatically exclude all real estate developers from serving on the town Planning Board but I feel extreme care must be exercised in selecting one who does. For example, a retired developer might have valuable input into Board deliberations, but I would be very reluctant to accept a person who is actively engaged in an ongoing real estate venture in New Boston. Being on a Board that regulates his own business activities immediately raises conflict of interest concerns. And on top of that the suitability of a person whose partner had repeatedly, even in the last few weeks, threatened to sue the town over real estate matters is questionable. At the April 6th meeting, several questions were raised about Mr. Hassel's fitness and the legality to be appointed. From the minutes it is clear that Selectman Briere vouched for him both personally and professionally. It is very interesting to me that the only original document as proof of residency that Mr. Hassel offered to the Town was a brand new NH drivers license. This license was issued on March 5th, just 5 days before Town Meeting, and just one month before he was appointed to the Planning Board. Since by State law members of the Planning Board must be a resident of the town, one of our questions is does the Board of Selectmen still accept this as being sufficient proof of residence? Looking at the whole sequence of events and the information we have presented, there has been deception. This deception has occurred in one of two ways: either two members of the Board of Selectmen were deceived by Mr. Hassel regarding his residency when he falsely completed his application; or, that the truth was already known by the Selectmen that he lived in Massachusetts, the deception occurred at the Board level. Since his appointment, it is quite clear from the evidence that he still does not reside in New Boston. Even if he were to move into town tomorrow, there is no doubt in my mind that deception has occurred and it has been ongoing for four months and that this must preclude Mr. Hassel from future membership on the Board.

To resolve this matter, Willard and I feel that the following actions must be taken for the protection of the Town because of the liability we were exposed to.

Number 1. Mr. Hassel must immediately be suspended from the Planning Board pending an investigation into his residency since March 5, 1998.

Number 2. Mr. Downing must be immediately suspended from the Planning Board pending an investigation of his residency.

Number 3. The Board of Selectmen must make a final decision at your next meeting being September 14th regarding the legality of the continued membership of these two individuals on the Planning Board.

We are prepared as individuals to pursue all of these

questions brought forth, and all other questions brought forth tonight, including Mr. Hassel's appointment, any possible deception, and any possible solution. The Board of Selectmen in New Boston has a long tradition of re-examining its decisions when new information has been presented. While I believe that the information we have brought forth could have been obtained by any one in the first four months, it is time to right a wrong and perform a self-examination into why a serious error was made.

WILLARD DODGE: I have an additional comment, as far as the residence in Cambridge, Mass. from talking with the people who own that property and manage the real estate there. They told us that he had been living there since 1996, and paying rent since 1996. Do you have any questions or would you try to answer what we feel we can at the time. I can only tell you that there have been other people involved in this, we are not going to name at this time, for various reasons and we are prepared to go wherever we have to go to see that this is taken care of. We are concerned that if anybody challenges any issues that happened with the Planning Board since April 6th they are subject to litigation. Because it's too ... April 6th Hans' appointment to that Board.

LOIS BRIERE: How long have you been conducting this investigation?

WILLARD DODGE: Since April 6th.

LOIS BRIERE: Since April 6th? So you want us to make a decision by September 14th? That was your request.

WILLARD DODGE: Because of the State law being as clear as it is, you don't have to be a rocket scientist to... We're saying to you, and obviously we're asking you to take notice of what we have done, that until you as a Board make your own determination, however you want to do that, that to protect this Town we need to suspend them pending the outcome of that investigation, and not allow them to do any more action on that Board, that's what we're saying.

SUSAN CLAY: I have a question about the pictures that you gave us. On pictures of the mailboxes, because Jenny Hassel, do you know who that is on the mailbox?

WILLARD DODGE: ...name written in over the top of the Hassel name which is printed on.

JOHN BUNTING: There are two names.

WILLARD DODGE: It says Jenny CUI. ...Mr. Hassel approached that mailbox, checked for mail, ... from that mailbox, go to the next door, take a key and open the door and go in the building.

SUSAN CLAY: Do we know who this Jenny is?

WILLARD DODGE: No, we don't know, and not really concerned. The address is listed to Mr. Hans Hassel.

SUSAN CLAY: Well, he could be paying a lease on his daughter's apartment.

(Multiple voices)

SUSAN CLAY: I'm asking a question.

BO STRONG: Let's keep the meeting under order here, we've done pretty well so far, and I will close the meeting if it gets disruptive, so let's just take, and everybody listen, and if there's a question ask.

SUSAN CLAY: You asked if we had questions, and I was asking you a question.

WILLARD DODGE: In response to that, we have observed Hans Hassel leave the Town of New Boston, on beaucoup days, including after late night Planning Board meetings, one that I think went to as late as midnight, and drive all the way to Cambridge, Mass. Now if he had a residence in New Boston, it seems to me he would have ... As I said before, we have spent hours and hours at all hours of the day and night checking Joe English Road, which he says is his residence, and yes he does appear there during the day time. But the car that he drives, a little blue Honda Civic, which is registered to Waldorf Estates Builders, Inc., has never, to our knowledge, been there at night. Never. And at the address, could he be paying somebody else's, absolutely he could, but the point is, he parked in the parking lot behind that building, he arrived at that building every night and spent the night there. Under State law he clearly is residing there.

SUSAN CLAY: One of the reasons we did not conduct any further investigation was that anyone who's ever come forward to be on any Planning Board, or those who register to vote, if ... they sign and affidavit and they get to vote. When Mr. Hassel was accused of not living in town, Todd Selig was at that time the Town Administrator, we asked him to look into the issue. He then got a copy of the license and also the checks. In turn we called up the Municipal Association and asked them if that was proof of identification, they said yes. At the same time, before we appointed him to the Board, we also called the Municipal Association and asked them if there was a conflict of interest, if it was legal to appoint a developer, a contractor, a real estate agent, or anybody ... to the Planning Board. At that point they said yes. To our knowledge, Mr. Hassel was a resident of New Boston. Todd Selig made that determination by asking him for his proof, by calling the Municipal Association and asking him, of his proof, the same he would do I suppose of anyone else here in town who was not necessarily a property owner but perhaps rented. As to Mr. Jeff Downing, he has recently sold the property that he was living in, which was his, actually his father-in-law's trust, and has moved to, temporarily, to a place in Francestown which he is selling. As plans, he has, was building a home here in New Boston and his immediate idea that his house was going to be built and he would be back. His house hasn't been built, I agree. I called him one time and asked him about that, he said, I'm an alternate, I think I need to think about this, and I did ask him to think about the fact that he had, his idea of selling that home was not that it was going to happen right away, that was a big expensive home, and he had no idea that it was going to sell as quickly as it did. I think you're absolutely right, Mr. Downing has temporarily, albeit temporarily, living in Francestown. And I have no problem in asking Mr. Downing to resign from the Board.

I can't imagine that if I had gone back to the Municipal Association and said that proof of identification as a license was OK to put this man on the Planning Board then turned around to you all and said I'd like to hire a private investigator at a

cost of who knows what, to follow a man around from April 6th to August whatever, to determine whether or not he's a resident of New Boston. And I don't know how many people would have agreed to that then. I think that we did what we could in the sense of asking everybody who applied for the positions for any board that came up. In the past, when I first came onto the Board, if a board opening came up, then the person whose position that was merely said "I want to be on the Board again", and they were automatically reappointed. I think it's much fairer and open process that when a board has an opening, that you put a notice out to the entire town to say to everyone "who would like to be on this board?" and then everyone who would like to be on that board puts up their hand and says "I'd like to be on this board" and they come in for an interview, and we interview them, and we take for granted, like we do for everyone else who comes before us, that they are a resident. When it was brought to our attention that some people, and it certainly wasn't the group of people that are here tonight, there were a few people, not more than a handful, that came to us and said we have some idea that Mr. Hassel is not a resident. And at that point was when we turned to Todd, who was our Town Administrator and asked him to do what he was supposed to do. And that's what he did.

I think that it's very important for everyone in Town to know that yes there were alternates on the Planning Board, and on the ZBA, but not one of them raised their hand and said I want to go from being an alternate to being a regular member. Again, we put a notice out in the paper, we put a notice out all over town, saying anyone who wants to be on the Planning Board, on the ZBA, on the Conservation Commission, on an commission that had an opening, we asked people, who wants to come, who wants to be involved. And one of the things that we want to do is have more town participation, more involvement, not just the same people again and again but anybody who wants to be involved in town business.

WILLARD DODGE: I'd like to respond to some of the points on that. First of all, ... listening to reason. The people who approached you at that meeting, and made these comments are all people who've been very involved in town activities and know people quite well in the town, and that's part of what I'm talking about when you listen to experience and reason. When you listen to Bo Strong who said there's something wrong here. You listen to reason and experience and ...

Another issue, you talked about experience and getting these people involved, that's wonderful we love to have new people involved. ...the eight years that I was on there, as I recall it was almost a ritual that we would ask ... Selectmen because we wanted to keep the integrity of our Board, ... if someone was dropping off we'd fill that position...we didn't wait for the person to come to us and say "hey I want to be up there". Because it is so important to keep the integrity of those boards together. You've got elections coming up in the very near future and I'd be willing to bet that ... just like every candidate you know, you're going to ask us to consider you because of your past experience. That will be one of the items on your...guarantee

it. If you looked at the case of people who are very experienced on the Planning Board, which is probably the most important board in this town, and you just for very little reason drop them off the Board...so that you as a Board will keep integrity on that Board and keep experience on that Board to keep it functioning in a proper manner to benefit the Town of New Boston. And again, I can't say that enough, the most important issue here is acting in the best interest of the people of the town. That's what your job as Selectman is to do. Not a handful of people who have a personal agenda to come before you and say we want to do this and we want to do that. That's not acting responsibly as the Board of Selectmen.

SUSAN CLAY: Well, if you remember on the vote of whether or not we should have an elected Board it was the majority that decided that they wanted an elected Board. Which translated to me that perhaps they wanted more of a voice or more of a change in what the present Board was. As to why we did not appoint the same people to the Planning Board, I think that all of us have an ability to look at the enthusiasm, or the reasons why people apply, and then make that decision, just like you do when you read anybody's resume, and the resume that you put at the top of the list after the main interview may not be the person that you hire.

WILLARD DODGE: No question of that, but ... answer the point. These people who develop an interest, that's wonderful and we need that, but as a Board you have a responsibility to put them on as alternates so they can learn that process.

SUSAN CLAY: There's nothing in the law that says that.

WILLARD DODGE: Law doesn't apply here, we're talking about reasonable and what's good for the Town of New Boston. If like you said the law doesn't say that a developer can't be on the Board. But you're creating some very valid reasons why we won't put an active developer on the Board. You have to protect the Town as a whole.

SUSAN CLAY: What could he do on the Planning Board as one Planning Board member that would be bad?

WILLARD DODGE: Because...but one vote, and another vote, can make a difference.

BO STRONG: We've got a question from the audience out here, Jim?

JIM DODGE: I'd like to make two points ... Susan ... misleading us. Number 1 was David Craig who served on the Zoning Board as an alternate, very much wanted to move up, and they did not allow that to happen. ...at the meeting ... on the Planning Board, ... and decided she wanted no part of it and left. She was persuaded by a couple of people to come back and have her own personal interview and then ... on the Planning Board. ... also.

SUSAN CLAY: Well that's not true, Jim.

JIM DODGE: It is true.

SUSAN CLAY: Excuse me, Sue Martin of whom you're talking about, and it would have been nice I think if Sue Martin and Jeff Downing and Hans Hassel had been here to be able to defend themselves.

JIM DODGE: Wait a minute Susan, I have been to meetings consistently that you've been a Selectmen, when you've said I

don't want to talk about that person because they're not here. Yet I've been to the next meeting where ... those people that ... and you've talked continually all night long. I don't want to hear that any more either.

SUSAN CLAY: Would you like to say when that was and how that was?

JIM DODGE: That's not what we're here for tonight.

SUSAN CLAY: Well, you brought it up.

JIM DODGE: ... I can talk to you about it later, what you said.

BO STRONG: I think we're here for one thing, Willard has the time. Do you have any other information, Willard that you would like...

WILLARD DODGE: ...myself. And that is I think it's very important here to have the members of the Board of Selectmen who personally vouched for Mr. Hans Hassel, person who has worked for Hans Hassel for two years, a person who ... to the Planning Board meeting with Hans Hassel and then rode all the way back to town with him, and he turned round and drove to Cambridge, instead of to ride home with somebody else. I find it hard to believe that after knowing somebody well enough to have worked with them for two years and known them well enough to vouch for them to be on an important Board, like the Planning Board in the Town of New Boston, and not know that they didn't even live here. Regardless of any license, checks, you can put any address you want on the license and it means nothing because ... did not have the means, and did not bother to go out and check that license ...

LOIS BRIERE: It's the second time that you've mentioned that I worked for Hans Hassel.

WILLARD DODGE: You said that.

LOIS BRIERE: No, I never said that. I said I worked (multiple voices) with him. Working for, and working with are two different things. No, you said I worked for, that would indicate he had been my boss, my superior, and... he was not.

WILLARD DODGE: Were you not with him for two years, working in the same ...?

LOIS BRIERE: No I was not.

WILLARD DODGE: How close to that. Because we've talked to people who say different.

LOIS BRIERE: A year. You talked to people, that I ... with him. And I find it quite amazing I didn't realize when I was elected Selectman that when I was driving to a meeting, a Planning Board meeting, at Southern New Hampshire office in Manchester, my car engine seized up, I didn't want to miss the meeting. I show up, I called Hans, he answered the phone, I said, are you going to the meeting tonight, he said yes, I said can I meet you and ride in with you? When I left, when he left me off, I got in my truck, drove home to Frankestown, and I saw him go up the road. The way you stated that coming back from that meeting,... I knew that he was going out to it. I did not have any indication that he was that night, and I do not, and I am not convinced now that he did. Because I physically saw him drive up to where he says he lives.

(multiple voices)

WILLARD DODGE: He drives up that hill, he goes out Bedford Road,

he goes down to the Bedford lights, he goes out 93, down to Cambridge, Mass. Now, he's been there, don't try to ... us. We have been there.

BO STRONG: ...information...Leslie.

LESLIE NIXON: I'd like to ask a question. Does anyone have any evidence that either Hans Hassel or Susan Martin have done anything to the detriment of the Town of New Boston since they've been serving on the Planning Board?

JOHN BUNTING: I think that I would like to answer that, because that ... I think we're drifting away from the issue that's our primary concern that there are members from the Planning Board who are not, by State law, ... Planning Board, and that if they participate in those decisions, I think it's fairly clear that it jeopardizes the decisions that that Planning Board makes. That's the reason we're here. Because all the decision they make could be challenged in Court because there are so clearly ... members on the Board.

LESLIE NIXON: ... that point. My concern is that you are placing the town in jeopardy, you are constantly questioning decisions of the Board, and maybe, you maybe have a valid basis for questioning whether they can be members of the Board. However, we have a lot of important issues to be dealing with. And my concern is these Selectmen, all three of them, I know have been working hard on the issues, the important issues that we have to face. And we have lost Todd, which is a great loss, and Burt, hopefully will be able to step into his shoes. But I don't understand there is a need for this kind of devisiveness, and this kind of attack, personal attack, on ..., hardworking, Town officials, as you know well, Willard, what it's like to be serving that position. Why is there the need for this? Why could not this be dealt with through asking Town Counsel to look into it. (Laughter).

WILLARD DODGE: ... our own counsel has been making, ...

LESLIE NIXON: Why? Because you want to take the town down?
(multiple voices)

WILLARD DODGE: No, ... that's why we're here before the Board tonight to take some action and get it ...

BO STRONG: This is the way that it'll work, we'll take all the information in and ... on in the other subject. OK. And we'll talk to our administrator and see what we can do with this, and we'll surely be contacting our Town Counsel as we always do, and I'm sure we'll be calling in Hans cos he's been accused, you know of not living here, it's worth an interview, you know Willard. Town Counsel may not recommend that, she may recommend a different tack, but that's not for me to say. What I'm looking for is to take the information in, and then we'll deal with it. I'm not sure that September 14th is the right time to deal with it because it doesn't give us much time. Particularly, after talking with Town Counsel, she's going to make a recommendation of what we have to do. And if it's going to involve going out and seeing where he lives and things like that well, we'll have to handle that when it comes.

WILLARD DODGE: All we're asking is in respect not to need to talk to Town Counsel, if she's not... And we're saying to you is

in the mean time, because they're not ... you suspend them pending that outcome of that investigation...

BO STRONG: I personally would not suspend anyone until I talked to them.

WILLARD DODGE: OK. Thank you very much for your time.

DON GROSSO: Bo, can I speak.

(unintelligible)

DON GROSSO: I just wanted to say first of all, having served on the Planning Board for a good number of years, there is a ... that a lot of people don't realize... Having said that though, I think Lois and Susan have the best interests of the Town at heart and I also would like to ... I don't like the overtones that have been here tonight.

BO STRONG: Thank you.

(speaker?): ... Board of Selectmen to ... decision...for... against...I think that you should hasten the process of making the decision.

BO STRONG: Thank you. Any other comments? If not, I'll close the meeting and thank you all very much for coming.