

Opinion

EDITORIAL: A time to lead

Posted May 3, 2018 at 9:37 AM

Updated May 3, 2018 at 11:16 AM

The Board of Selectmen spent about 30 minutes or so during its last meeting listening to John Livermore, of Sustainable Marblehead, and Neal Duffy, the Green Communities coordinator for the Northeast Region, give their spiel on Articles 44 and 45 on the Town Meeting warrant.

Article 44 addresses stretch codes, environmentally minded codes for new buildings and Article 45 seeks a pledge from the town's people to reach toward a goal of 100 percent carbon free energy.

Board members listened attentively and asked a number of good questions and yet fell short when faced with the opportunity to lead.

Livermore and the eight or 10 Sustainable Marblehead members in the audience were clearly hoping the presentation would end with the board's endorsement of the articles. It did not.

Chairman Jackie Belf-Becker explained that typically, 99 percent of the time the Board of Selectmen does not weigh in on citizen's petitions, such as Articles 44 and 45. Every other board member echoed that sentiment as well.

We understand the Board of Selectmen can't commit or comment on every citizen's petition brought forth, however, this could have been the 1 percent.

During the meeting, Selectman Judy Jacobi said she believed in both articles and even has a Sustainable Marblehead sticker on her car, but still felt the issue was one for Town Meeting, not the board. Likewise, Harry Christensen said there are two sides to every story, but the board was only hearing one. He said he'd have to hear arguments against, "if there are any," at Town Meeting before he could vote to support the article.

Five days later, he told residents during the League of Women Voters Candidates Night that he would vote for both articles.

Actually, each board member except for Jim Nye, who wasn't in attendance, offered their personal support of the articles during Candidates Night. It was nice to see them throw their support Sustainable Marblehead's way, but why not take a leadership role and express that opinion together as a board?

Christensen mentioned several times during the candidate's forum, how well the Board of Selectmen in its present state works together. Choosing to support the pair of articles because you believe in them would have been a great way to illustrate that.

This is the type of endeavor that begs for leadership and the board could have taken a stand and led, but instead it chose to play it safe. Typical.