

I volunteered to serve on the Select Board to continue the work I started over a year ago when I secured passage of the Traffic Committee bylaw at Town Meeting last year. Despite the efforts of Moses Grader and opposition from department heads, that committee is starting to get some traction. But apparently my help is still needed. This fact was driven home to me by Select Board Chairwoman Erin Noonan on our way out of Town Meeting. "I don't understand why you're running," she said. "You're interested in traffic safety. We don't really do that." Exactly, I thought quietly.

What I've learned is that transportation is falling through the cracks because elected officials have failed to provide oversight of unelected bureaucrats. Plans are presented for public comment, approved, and then ignored by unelected bureaucrats when the concrete is poured. Public requests are ignored, then suffered, then sloughed off with promises that no one means to keep. Occasionally, someone has the tenacity to get a traffic light or a crosswalk passed at Town Meeting over the objections of officialdom, but mostly this happens quietly and out of the public eye.

I'm not going to argue with anyone about these facts, or debate them. They're a matter of public record, if you're willing to file public records requests (and appeals), to read official emails, planning approvals, engineering studies, EPA reports, policy documents, Town Meeting minutes, and pore through the newspaper archives. In fact, no public official has disputed these facts or challenged them.

It's not just me. Mary McCarrison, who was called a "lunatic" for asking questions about the schools, feels my pain. John DiPiano had to file a public records request to get a truthful answer to the question of lost grant money; when he made that information public, the *Current* treated him as the leader of some underground cabal and officialdom shouted "misinformation!" When he motioned to postpone the vote on Article 38 until we could get more answers, the Town Moderator simply ignored his right to do so. Tom Peach, who not only threw a microphone at Town Meeting and pulled a speed bump off his (and I do mean his) street in Peach Highlands, is as frustrated as I am.

It doesn't matter your politics or your positions. The fact is town government is broken. Democracy in Marblehead is broken. The Select Board and Town Administrator let our Building Commissioner operate for years without a license. When the state fired him, we learned that Marblehead didn't even need to have its own building commissioner. When the Town Planner asked for \$1.43 million to rebuild two bridges so the Light Department could drive its trucks over them, the Select Board said yes. I'd ask why residents are paying twice (through our light bills and our taxes) for electric company infrastructure. (I and others raised a stink, at which point the MMLD announced it didn't need to drive its trucks over those bridges in the first place! That's what real oversight looks like.)

Where was the Select Board when taxpayers were shelling out hundreds of thousands on a malingering cop because the Town Administrator couldn't find the time to fire him.

When voters elected new board members to oust a bad Superintendent -- the dangerous disarray at the schools is evidence of his mismanagement -- Erin Noonan and Moses Grader saw fit to praise him effusively. Then Erin took to the newspaper to publicly attack the School Committee over the Coffin school building and Moses Grader sneered that they were taking money "from our side" of the budget. That's rich from a man who is using free cash and debt overrides to plug budget holes while claiming the mantle of fiscal responsibility.

Town Meeting 2024 was traumatic for me. What we all saw on display was a phalanx of public officials willing to violate the democratic process to try to press through the most consequential change to our zoning in history. Incumbents now blame "misinformation" while Dan Fox told the League of Women Voters forum that wasn't really a democratic vote. For or against, a 4.2% margin of victory is huge these days.

I'm the town's official MBTA Advisory Board representative; I'm a member of the state's Metropolitan Planning Organization's "Vision Zero" traffic safety task force; my dissertation advisor from the University of Michigan Engineering College wrote the book *Zoned Out*. I know what misinformation looks like.

I can only promise to continue to ask hard questions, and *follow up* questions, to continue to make powerful people uncomfortable, and to meet the public's concerns and questions with honest answers based on actual, verifiable data.

I'm running because our town government is broken and I like to fix things. I think too many people are dying on Marblehead streets and I think we need to spend more on schools. I'm more interested in what other people think and *why* they believe what they do. In fact, I'm fascinated. So there won't be yard signs or Facebook pages for me to "get my message out." Please check out my published work and blog posts, and use the contact page on my website: danalbert.com. Or email me directly: danalbert@danalbert.com.

You have a choice on June 11 between five candidates and me. I ask that you fill in one bubble. That's Albert, Dan Albert.