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First Selectman

TOWN OF MADISON CONNECTICUT 06443-2563 BOARD OF SELECTMEN

William Gladstone
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Statement of the Madison Board of Selectmen on the 2006 Charter Revision Commission Final Report

This statement is issued to clarify the July 6, 2006 vote of the Madison Board of Selectmen on the Final Report of the 2006 Charter Revision Commission. We approved the Commission's Final Report without change. However, this approval did not represent our endorsement of the most report's controversial change: electing, rather than appointing, members of the Madison Planning and Zoning Commission.

Background

The Madison Board of Selectmen appointed a Charter Revision Commission on November 22, 2004. The creation of this Commission, just three years after Madison voters had overwhelmingly approved a Town Charter revision, was in response to a local petition to change the Madison Planning and Zoning Commission from an appointed to an elected commission. Although the petition did not meet legal standards, this Board used its authority to appoint a Commission to study the Town Charter and make recommendations.

Madison's Planning and Zoning Commission: Elected or Appointed

While numerous issues related to local governance were raised and resolved during this Charter revision process, the most significant was that of electing or appointing the Planning and Zoning Commission. In their Final Report, the Charter Revision Commission included language to change Planning and Zoning from an appointed to an elected commission. They did so not because they supported this change but as the only way to permit the citizens of Madison to vote on this issue within State law.

This Board also carefully examined the issue and it is our firm position that an appointed Commission is best for the Town of Madison. We sincerely believe the appointment process provides the best assurance that the Planning and Zoning Commission will have the proper balance of expertise, experience and objectivity to plan for our land use future and to make the best decisions to lead us to that future.

Decision: Special Election

This Board approved the Charter change language to an elected Commission only to enable citizens to vote on this issue. We also approved voting on this issue separately from other Charter changes that do have our support. This separate vote will take place at special election. Madison citizens will have the opportunity to study this important issue on its own merits and with the full understanding that the Board of Selectmen does not support the change to an elected Commission.

For more than thirty years, Madison's appointed Planning and Zoning Commission has made the decisions that have created the community we know and love today. As your Board of Selectmen, we urge all citizens to study this issue carefully, seek objective information and decide if this Charter change should be accepted or rejected.