

Vansylyvong-Bizier, Jerrica

From: Gambino, Melina
Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2025 8:27 AM
To: Carrier, Robert; City Council Archive; Cullen, Fergus; Hackett, Debra; Nemeth, Linnea; Retrosi, Anthony; Richer, April; Shanahan, Dennis; Warach, Robert; Williams, Lindsey
Cc: Vansylyvong-Bizier, Jerrica
Subject: Public Comment in Ethics Complaint Against Councillor Cullen

Good Morning Councilors,

Below is my comment in regards to the ethics complaint against Councilor Cullen. I'm unable to attend the meeting tonight, but I would like my comment included in the public record.

Sincerely,
Melina Gambino

City Councilor Fergus Cullen is a critical asset to the Dover Planning Board who has many decades of public service. The optics of the councilor's decision not to acknowledge his personal work with McEneaney Survey Associates prior to his vote on June 11, 2024 aren't good; but this was an oversight, not an ethics violation. To elevate this situation to an ethics violation that calls for the removal of Councilor Cullen from the Planning Board is a significant overreach. Councilor Cullen has faced undue criticism of his character throughout the public process on his project, and this is an unfair continuation of that.

I know Councilor Cullen because I am a member of the Planning Board. Since I joined almost two years ago he has been an example and a model for how I conduct myself on the board. Councilor Cullen comes prepared for meetings, he is familiar with the projects when they are presented, he asks critical and sometimes difficult questions, he listens to abutter concerns and sees how the development proposal might accommodate them, he rarely misses a meeting, and he is a relentless advocate for more attainable housing in Dover.

As members of the Planning Board we frequently see the same developers, surveyors, and engineers on the projects that come before us. It's the reality that any planning board in a small and even large city faces. Had Councilor Cullen hired a surveyor from Boston instead of someone local for his 6th Street project, that could have opened the door to a different type of accusation.

I did not vote in favor of Councilor Cullen's initial 6th Street project proposal. I am including this information because I want to demonstrate that I can be discerning in a situation where I have an existing professional relationship with someone. I am not biased in supporting Councilor Cullen in this ethics matter because I know him professionally, but I am advocating for him on merit as reflected by his track record of leadership on the Planning Board.

Councilor Cullen is a committed public servant who has volunteered countless hours in support of improving this community. Removing Councilor Cullen from the Planning Board would be doing a huge disservice to the City of Dover.

Melina Gambino

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