

Comments and opinions on this site are not necessarily those of the members of Brooklyn For Sensible Growth (BFSG). Posting comments on the BFSG site is similar to a "letter to the editor" and is not an endorsement by BFSG of the opinions being made in the letter. Brooklyn For Sensible Growth shall not be held liable for any such information written by concerned citizens or Brooklyn residents.

Brooklyn Town Hall and the Loss of Innocence

In a time when distrust in government is deep and wide-reaching one would think that small local administrations would strive to govern honestly and with care. Sadly, the Brooklyn Town Hall has lowered the bar. Due to the recent development of a possible Super Wal-Mart being built in our midst increased scrutiny by residents in town affairs grows under a focused lens. Distrust among residents is also growing. I write this letter having talked with both members of Brooklyn for Sensible Growth and average citizens who have no connection to this organization. I also know well numerous individuals in town government. I will not sign my name to this document because there would be negative consequences from various people in town whose provincial interests I call into question. Also, I am not a member of Brooklyn for Sensible Growth though I do agree with most of their tenets. Furthermore, I do not wish to burn bridges; as the saying goes: "hold your friends close, hold your enemies closer". Everything to which I refer in this letter is verifiable. There's no spin or stretching of the facts. These are but a few of the many issues at hand as compiled over the course of that last few years:

- There are reports that First Selectman, Roger Engle, knew that the Wal-Mart Corporation was eyeing Brooklyn as a place to build a Super Wal-Mart as early as 2005. Even if it was not that early Mr. Engle nevertheless kept this secret from town residents. The Wal-Mart Corporation requested that he do so. He complied. And though on the face of it this action is apparently not illegal many residents question the ethics. After all, who was Roger Engle elected to represent: the Wal-Mart Corporation or the residents of the Town of Brooklyn?
- Six requests for a State Environmental Review Team (ERT) were mailed from the Brooklyn Post Office on December 9, 2008. They were properly and clearly addressed. One was sent to Senator Don Williams at his state office address. Five were mailed to the Brooklyn Town Hall; one to the Board of Selectmen and four to Brooklyn Commission chairmen: the Economic and Development Commission (EDC), Planning and Zoning (PZC), Inland/Wetlands (I/W) and Conservation Commission (CC). One of these letters never made it to the intended recipient. The PZC chair, Tom Doherty only heard of the ERT request 35 days later when someone faxed him a copy of the original letter. The powerful PZC happens to be one of the commissions over which the First Selectman, Roger Engle, wields less control than others. It is increasingly known that there are employees in the Town Hall who readily shuffle papers and slow-pedal relevant documents pertaining to various projects with whose authors they disagree. Letters, papers and documents have disappeared in the past, and not just under Roger Engle's watch. There is a growing pattern of deceit and illegality that undermines a clean and properly functioning democracy. This is to put you on notice: no one who works in the Brooklyn Town Hall is above suspicion. We are watching you.

Comments and opinions on this site are not necessarily those of the members of Brooklyn For Sensible Growth (BFSG). Posting comments on the BFSG site is similar to a "letter to the editor" and is not an endorsement by BFSG of the opinions being made in the letter. Brooklyn For Sensible Growth shall not be held liable for any such information written by concerned citizens or Brooklyn residents.

- As reported in the Villager, January 23, Mr. Engle replaced three smart and hard-working Recreation Commission members with three cronies. When Villager's reporter, Matt Sanderson, questioned Mr. Engle about his motives for the change Engle did not directly answer the question but responded that he "did not intend to micromanage the Recreation Department and said the changes to the commission were not of a personal nature." Mr. Engle has a history of not directly answering the questions put to him; rather, he responds by blowing smoke in general denials or changes the subject entirely. The three members of this commission that were summarily dismissed were the individuals most critical of the ordinance changes that Mr. Engle attempted to have implemented as law several weeks before. These changes that would have given the First Selectmen more power to meddle in this and several other commissions including the PZC. There was no other sensible rationale given for the proposed changes to town ordinances. Mr. Engle has *never* answered with credibility the need for ordinance change. With denials aside his orchestrated set of moves was a bald-faced attempt at a power-grab by the First Selectman. Thankfully, these ordinance changes were soundly and smartly defeated by voters. Neither gracious in defeat nor considering what would be best in long term interests for the town of Brooklyn Roger Engle continues to punish those who would disagree with him. He has ordained various commission members who agree with him, most notably on the Economic and Development Commission, those who would do his bidding. If he can't wrest power in one way he will grab it through bully tactics. He has misused his power time and again. There's a plain and clear record of it.
- Showcasing another issue is that one of the newly named members of the Recreation Department Commission, Paul Archer, came forward with a business proposal to purchase the old recreation building shortly after his placement on the commission. This brings up yet another growing issue of concern with residents: there are too many dark horses sitting on commissions who have business dealings in town, many appointed by the First Selectman. These people, filled with conflicts of interest, are very careful to concern themselves with their own selfish bottom lines at the expense of the whole of the town. In a closely related matter, one underscored by Leonard Bissonnette, a longtime Brooklyn resident, is the allowance of one individual to serve on multiple boards and commissions simultaneously. This raises serious ethical concerns, conflicts of interest and opens doors to abuses of power and influence.
- Members of commissions who are not in favor of a Super Wal-Mart in Brooklyn have been bullied and forced to recuse themselves from proceedings. However, commission members in favor of this massive construction project have been allowed to remain on their commissions thus skewing the vote tallies overwhelmingly in favor of the Wal-Mart Corporation.

We have a right to responsible leaders in whom we have confidence. We have a right to fair, open and clean government at all levels. We have a right to commission appointments that are aboveboard and whose members have actual

Comments and opinions on this site are not necessarily those of the members of Brooklyn For Sensible Growth (BFSG). Posting comments on the BFSG site is similar to a "letter to the editor" and is not an endorsement by BFSG of the opinions being made in the letter. Brooklyn For Sensible Growth shall not be held liable for any such information written by concerned citizens or Brooklyn residents.

concern for the direction in which Brooklyn will grow and not merely their selfish bottom lines in mind. We've had too much governance through hubris, arrogance, greed and battery. In this time we are more hopeful for an open and visionary executive branch in our nation's capital. In this time, as we look forward to leaders who will follow the rule of law in Washington, a growing coterie of residents in Brooklyn demand that our leaders employ vision, exercise scrupulous judgment and represent *all* the tax payers in a legal and ethical manner. This good-old-boy-business-as-usual-bully-tactic-underhanded government must come to an end. To this end we call upon Roger Engle and the entire Board of Selectmen to step down so that the Town of Brooklyn's heart and soul, its residents, can find renewed faith in our leaders in a special election. We call upon the State Ethics Board and the Attorney General to look into this cesspool of flagrant abuses and dirty deeds. There are those in the Town Hall who have declared war upon its citizens. Take notice: we are fighting back.