

Richard H. Girard
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The Honorable Jay Ruais
Mayor of Manchester
% Mr. Jeffrey Belanger, Director
Department of Planning and Community Development
via email LUC@manchesternh.gov

Mayor Ruais & Director Belanger:

I am writing in the hope of being appointed to the Zoning Ordinance Steering Committee.

As you know, I have taken a keen interest in a variety of zoning issues that have presented themselves over the years. What you may not know is that this interest predates my involvement with city government, which began in 1991. As an undergraduate at Boston College, I took several classes focused on urban governance.

While an assistant to Mayor Wieczorek, issues of planning, zoning, building codes, housing codes and permitting were among my responsibilities. This work involved following and testifying on legislation in Concord, researching and writing regulation changes and working with developers and citizens who were often frustrated about proposed or pending projects.

Though I learned much working on these issues in the mayor's office, I learned even more as an alderman who was routinely contacted by residents about a variety of planning and zoning issues in their neighborhoods. While it's true that many people simply don't want change, it's also true that neighbor feedback often raises issues that make projects better. I trust this committee will be all ears as it does its work.

Zoning is particularly important as it sets the basic framework in which all other regulatory actions are considered. Robert Frost once wrote, "good fences make good neighbors." Although he likely didn't have zoning in mind, the reality is that zoning rules are regulatory fences. Set them correctly and they will serve their neighbors and the city well; miss the mark and misery will follow.

Perhaps more important than my educational, professional and civic experience is my lived experience in the city of Manchester over the past 54 years. I grew up in, what was at the time, a new single family development on the West Side. (That home is still in the family and I've seen how the neighborhood has

changed.) I had extended family that lived in a single family neighborhood in the North End, where my mom grew up, and a multi-family/mixed use neighborhood downtown, where, my grandfather had his doctor's office and my great uncle owned and operated a neighborhood grocery store. My grandfather's office was attached to his two family home on Myrtle St. My uncle also lived in a two family on Myrtle St., around the corner from his store on Union St.

After leaving home, I lived as a renter and owner in: "decker" neighborhoods on Notre Dame Ave. and Hevey St. (both between Amory and Kelley streets); two family neighborhoods on Moore St and Reed St.; a commercial neighborhood on Maple St. at the corner of Somerville St. and my current neighborhood on Orange St., which has multiple types of housing and is bounded by zones that host multiple civic and commercial uses.

In short, my lived experiences within the city have exposed me to a very wide range of neighborhood settings, enabling me to inherently understand the value of and challenges faced by each. It's one thing to talk with people about their neighborhood environment, it's quite another to have experienced them as a resident. Even the year I lived in New Boston informs my understanding of what makes Manchester livable and what causes people and businesses to "flee to the burbs."

Finally, I'm not just a resident of Manchester. I am a self employed businessman who, at times, has operated businesses requiring space for as many as 50 people who worked for me and the clients we served. I have rented a variety of office spaces in a variety of neighborhoods, not all of which have been in Manchester. Some of these spaces were in the downtown, others were in commercial spaces that abutted residential areas, still others were in office parks. Well before COVID, I understood the needs and desires of people who wanted to work from home, inasmuch as I have had a home office for years.

In closing, my lived educational, professional and civic experiences as a city official, alderman, school board member (from the two years I served on the Special Committee on Redistricting) resident and businessman provide me with unique insights and understanding into how Manchester "works" and how it could "work better" for those who already live or operate their businesses here, those who would like to and those we would like to make Manchester their city.

Thank you for your consideration of my request to serve.

Very truly yours,

s:// *Richard H. Girard*

Rich Girard

Having shared relevant experiences in my letter of interest, below, please find a summary list of them, in lieu of a full resume.

Relevant civic experiences:

- Office of Mayor Raymond J. Wieczorek, January 1992 - August 1997
- Alderman at-Large, January 1998 - January 2000
- School Committeeman at-Large, January 2016 - January 2020
 - Special Committee on Redistricting

Relevant professional experiences:

- Primerica Financial Services, December 2001 - present
 - self employed/business owner
- Girard at Large in the Morning, September 2011 - November 2017
 - Often featured and discussed a variety of zoning, planning and code enforcement issues in Manchester and surrounding communities.
- Girard Marketing, LLC, August 1997 - April 2002
 - self employed/business owner

Relevant Educational Experiences:

- Manchester High School West, 1987
- Boston College, 1991