

Janice O'Connell

From: Susan James <srjames46@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 18, 2013 10:16 PM
To: Janice O'Connell
Subject: County Charter Review Committee

Dear Members of the Committee:

As a new Selectman in Sandwich, I have been orienting myself to some of the major issues faced by our community. To that effect, I have become aware of some of the controversial issues surrounding potential changes in the County governance structure. I have read the Charter, your meeting minutes from June 5, and the Special Commission Governance Recommendations. I am writing you with my personal opinion/suggestions and these in no way represent a formal collective opinion from the Sandwich Board of Selectmen.

In reading the previously mentioned documents, I am concerned by the suggestion of eliminating the elected Barnstable County Assembly of Delegates in favor of a single board of commissioners. While I think that a five member Board of Commissioners makes sense for the executive function, eliminating the legislative function that is the purview of the Assembly would be unfortunate in my opinion. Most public governance structures consist of executive and legislative branches that provide a "checks and balances" system to optimize governance. This would be eliminated if both executive and legislative function were to be subsumed under one board, and I don't believe this would be optimal for the County functioning. I can understand that having 15 members of the Assembly might be cumbersome for carrying out business, so I am wondering if it would be possible to consolidate in some way that might preserve the voting rights for communities while reducing the number of elected delegates. Right now, I do not have any concrete suggestions for doing this, but would urge the Committee to consider this option.

Respectfully,
Susan R. James